UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE SONNET IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

by

LEWIS G. STERNER

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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Printed in
The United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

Plan of the Study

The purposes of this thesis as a study of the American sonnet are as follows:

1. To give a chronological survey of the sonnet form in our literature; that is, to show exactly what was or is to date the contribution of every major and many minor American poets to the corpus of American sonnet literature.

2. To form a collection of American sonnets which will be useful to the student rather than merely interesting to the general reader.

3. To analyze the structure of the American sonnet as it has been used by over two hundred American sonneteers, and to present the findings in a number of self-explanatory tables.

4. To afford a bibliography of the American sonnet and of the use of the sonnet sequence in our literature.

In this chronological survey, there will be little attempt made at aesthetic evaluation. A very great number of the writers considered must of necessity be dismissed with no comment at all; a mere mention of their place in American chronology, and of the number of sonnets written by them, must suffice. Their sonnets will be classified in another alphabetical list as Italian, English, Compromise, or Irregular, and they will have their place in the bibliography. To say anything more of them that is significant would be impossible. The colorlessness of theme and treatment of a very large part of the sonnet output, as of the poetic output in general, of any given era baffles any attempt at careful discrimination. On the other hand, the very great sonneteers cannot be so summarily dismissed. But even here the criticism will be objective rather than subjective. The best of our sonneteers need no further comment; their works speak for themselves.

As an integral part of this chronological survey of the American sonnet, there has been gathered together a thoroughly representative collection of American sonnets. Beginning with

Colonel David Humphreys, the first ascertainable American sonneteer, and extending up to and including Elinor Wylie, whose last volume of verse was published posthumously in 1929, there are two hundred and thirteen sonnets representing every era of our literature, and practically every poet of major importance, beside many of decidedly subordinate interest.

These principles of inclusion have been followed:

1. The greater number of sonnets here reprinted are in this collection, not only because of the importance of their authors, but also because of their own intrinsic excellence. The sonnets by George Henry Boker, Robert Frost, George Cabot Lodge, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Lloyd Mifflin, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Edwin Arlington Robinson, to mention but a few, have been selected purely on the grounds of their poetic merit. It was not a question of whether the author was important enough to warrant inclusion; it was the more difficult one of choosing what seemed best among an abundance.

It may not be amiss to say at this point that the obvious failure to quote from certain authors universally recognized as able sonneteers has been in every case due to copyright difficulties.

2. Certain American poets would of necessity be represented in any collection of American sonnets. William Cullen Bryant, Sidney Lanier, Silas Weir Mitchell, and Edgar Allan Poe are cases in point. They are not outstanding sonneteers, but no collection would be complete without at least one specimen of their sonnet writing. Their large place in American literature demands their inclusion in this particularized study.

3. A very considerable number of men and women are represented whose works in general are not of primary, even secondary, importance in our literature, but who have written one or more sonnets of real merit, sonnets which compare favorably with most of those written by other and better known poets. A comparison of the sonnets of these minor poets with the greater bulk of their other poetry will often reveal that in the restrictions imposed by the definite fourteen line decasyllabic form lay their salvation. The sentimentality and general diffuseness that characterize so much of our forgotten poetry

seem to the author to be rather less in evidence in that part of it written in the sonnet form. Not that a great deal of American sonnet literature is not sentimental and vague. It is. But the very brevity of the form, and the incisiveness of the best models, models which must indubitably have been in the minds of even the least inspired of versifiers, have worked somewhat for a greater directness of expression and severity of thought. The sonnets, for example, of Emma Lazarus seem to the present writer to be much better as poetry than the bulk of her verse. If men of a higher poetic order, men like William Cullen Bryant, Sidney Lanier, and Bayard Taylor, seem to be direct denials of this hypothesis, in that their sonnet poetry is inferior to the bulk of their work, it can only be answered that the whole bent of their work is opposed in spirit and form to the restrictions imposed by the sonnet form.

4. A number of early sonnets are included because of their importance historically in our literature. No claim is made that they are other than mediocre. But the standard must of necessity be lower when the material to choose from is limited. Cases in point are the sonnets by David Humphreys, Samuel Low, Richard Bingham Davis, and Peter Bayley. A few other sonnets have been selected to show the general nature of hundreds of others written at the time.

All biographical material except the dates has been excluded from this survey of the sonnet in our literature. The only exception to this has been in the case of our first sonneteer, Colonel David Humphreys, whose primary place in our sonnet literature, coupled with his intimate association with General Washington, seemed to warrant a brief biographical note.

The third major portion of this thesis concerns itself with an analysis of the rime schemes used by the American sonnet writers, over two hundred in number, who have been considered. The approximately seven thousand sonnets included have been grouped into four main categories, Italian, English, Compromise, and Irregular, each of which will require a word of explanation.

By the Italian sonnet is meant one which has an octave *a b b a a b b a* and a sestet of some arrangement of the rimes *c d* or *c d e*. The term Italian was used for the definite purpose of avoiding the necessity of distinguishing between the strict Petrarchan form and its Miltonic variation. In allowing himself the liberty of having the thought run over from the octave into the sestet, Milton violated what had hitherto been regarded as an immutable law of the sonnet as perfected by Petrarch, a full pause at the end of the octave. This Miltonic variation of the Italian form is at present as hallowed by successful accomplishment in poetry as the more strict Petrarchan form with which it is identical in every other respect. It is, in other words, a true Italian sonnet. The more general term Italian was, therefore, adopted because it so properly included both the Petrarchan and the Miltonic forms, and because it obviated the necessity of saying arbitrarily that a given sonnet was Petrarchan or Miltonic in structure. The difficulty was not the mere mechanical one of examining the first eight lines of thousands of American sonnets written in the Italian form in order to determine the existence or non-existence of a break between the octave and the sestet. Rather it was the inability to decide arbitrarily what constituted a full break in the thought. The writer was early brought to realize the almost insuperable difficulty of classifying every sonnet of the Italian rime scheme as definitely Petrarchan or Miltonic. Some there are as rigidly constructed as the best of the Italian master's. Others are just as obviously in the direct tradition of Milton. But many are more elusive. Mere mechanics cannot properly be made the basis of a distinction between the two forms. On the other hand, to say that the test of a Petrarchan sonnet is the rising of the octave to a climax is too subjective a test to be applied accurately and definitely to thousands of sonnets. Recognizing, therefore, that the Miltonic sonnet is not a distinct form, as is the Shakespearean, but only a very effective and often extremely subtle variation of the normal Petrarchan form, the author has, in the tables which follow his chronological treatment of the sonnet in American literature, classified as Italian all those sonnets with

a double quatrain riming *abbaabba,* and a sestet with rimes in *cd* or *cde.*

For the sake of uniformity, the term English, rather than Shakespearean, is used to designate the sonnet of three quatrains and a couplet.

There remains a large body of sonnets which are neither Italian nor English in form, but which are compromises between the two forms. The form *a b b a c d d c e f f e g g* is the most frequently used of this group, and will illustrate very well the designation employed. In so far as it consists of three quatrains and a couplet, it is English in form; but the turn of the rimes upon themselves in the three quatrains is just as distinctly Italian. Similarly, a form *a b b a a c c a d e f d e f* suggests a hybrid of the two orthodox forms. The position of the *a* rime in the octave, and the division of the final six lines into two tercets is Italian; while the introduction of a sixth rime suggests the seven rimes of the English sonnet. In all, eight of these compromise sonnet forms were selected for special analysis.

A still further group of sonnets had to be classified as irregular. A purist might in part object to their being called sonnets at all. Some forms are but slightly less regular than the compromise sonnets just discussed, and were not included in that category merely because of the very few instances in which they were used. Any sonnet form which might conceivably have been labeled compromise was classified as irregular if it was used less than twenty times, a number fixed upon quite arbitrarily. Most of the irregular sonnets, however, are distinctly what the name implies, i. e., poems of fourteen decasyllables which show an utter failure to carry out some definite rime pattern. A sonnet like Celia Thaxter's *Beethoven,* with a rime scheme *a b b a c d c d e f e f g g,* is properly labeled irregular, because of its irregular use of the Italian and English principles. Any poem of fourteen decasyllables labeled a sonnet, or appearing under the caption *Sonnets,* or occurring in a definite sonnet sequence was taken as such, in spite of an at times distressing lack of any regular rime scheme. There were two ex-

ceptions. Fourteen lines of blank verse, or seven couplets were excluded. No count was kept of such exclusions, but they did not total a score out of the thousands of sonnets read.

A study of the alphabetical list of American sonneteers and the rime schemes employed by them will show every conceivable attitude toward the four forms. A number of our poets have used the Italian form exclusively. Among others are Edgar Fawcett, Louise Imogen Guiney, Caroline Hazard, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and George Sterling. A smaller number have confined themselves to the English form; e. g., David Morton, with one exception, Henry Theodore Tuckerman, Clement Wood, and Jones Very. A large number, almost exclusively poets of minor importance, and of limited sonnet output, have written only irregular sonnets. But in general, American writers have utilized two, three, or all four of the forms classified in this study. One of the tables will show all those poets whose sonnets number more than five who wrote exclusively in one form. The alphabetical list of American sonneteers will show exactly what was the contribution to each of the four categories of every poet considered.

General Survey of the American Sonnet

One might well ask of this chronological survey of a hundred and fifty years of American sonnet writing these very specific questions: To what extent has the sonnet been used by American poets? What changes in form has the sonnet undergone? To what degree has the sonnet been a genuine poetic vehicle in American poetry, and to what extent has it been merely a convenient and conventional prosodic exercise? To what new uses, if any, has it been put, particularly by the younger, more frankly experimental, verse writers of this country?

The best answer to the first question is the long list of two hundred and three American poets who have used the sonnet form, and the formidable number of sonnets they wrote. (See pages 123-128.) The late appearance of the sonnet form in American poetry—the fourth quarter of the eighteenth cen-

tury being the earliest date that can possibly be assigned to our first specimen, *Addressed to My Friends at Yale College,* by Colonel David Humphreys—is not remarkable in the light of the amount and nature of the poetry in general that was written in the colonies during all of the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century. The use of the sonnet form by the few men and women of Puritan New England who wrote verse would have been to the highest degree unusual. Nothing even suggestive of such refinement of poetic expression seems possible in an atmosphere where the Rev. John Cotton found it necessary to defend church singing by scriptural citations and a carefully reasoned argument of four main and six sub-headings. A stray sonnet or two might have been expected from the Virginia colony, which must have harbored more than one reader of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton, but apparently none was written. The Hartford wits wrote verse of a kind foreign to the genius and form of the sonnet. It was hoped by the author that a sonnet might be found among the poems of Philip Freneau, but here too he was disappointed.

Once, however, the sonnet had made an appearance in American literature, it found almost universal favor. The American poets of major or minor rank who have not, according to their ordinarily accepted collected works, used the sonnet form at all are not very numerous. The obvious danger of negative assertion prohibits a categorical list of such writers. Rather, the absence of any poet's name from the chronological survey and alphabetical lists which follow must be accepted as a tacit acknowledgment of the author's failure to locate any sonnets by that particular writer.

Such a statement of American sonneteers and their sonnets as will be found in the following pages suggests a comparison with the body of sonnet material in English literature during the corresponding period. Only a thorough investigation of the entire body of English poetry during the past hundred and fifty years would make any such comparison more than a rough approximation. It will, therefore, not be attempted. More debatable and more interesting is a comparison of the two sonnet

literatures from the aesthetic rather than from the formal point of view. During the first half century of American sonnet writing there is no comparison. During this period, which may, for convenience, be bounded by 1770, the birth of Wordsworth, and 1821, the death of Keats, the sonnet was being used in England by several young men who were masters of its subtlest possibilities. By the year 1802, for example, Wordsworth alone had written at least nineteen sonnets, among them such noteworthy ones as *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, Composed by the Sea-Side Near Calais, It Is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free, To Touissant L'Ouverture,* and *London, 1802.* Only forty-four of the more than seven thousand sonnets considered in this thesis can be placed before this date, the work of David Humphreys, Royall Tyler, Samuel Low, Richard Bingham Davis, Robert Treat Paine, and Peter Bayley. Historically interesting, and, at times, not lacking in worth, these sonnets are nevertheless not to be compared with those written by the youthful Wordsworth and others in England during the same period. By 1820 Wordsworth's sonnets were one hundred and sixty-seven in number. In 1821 and 1822 he composed the sequence of one hundred and thirty-two *Ecclesiastical Sonnets.* In the former year John Keats died, leaving behind him a very considerable sonnet achievement, including two or three of the highest order. It would be extremely difficult to point to a single American sonnet written before 1820 of more than ordinary merit. In that year Longfellow was fourteen years of age, and Lowell but two. Bryant's earliest sonnets are dated 1824, and they are not significant. Washington Allston and Henry Pickering had written their merely competent sonnets by this time, and Joseph Rodman Drake's one sonnet (see page 12) had certainly been composed—he died in 1820—although probably not published. Here the list ends.

But beginning with Longfellow, the American sonnet entered upon a distinguished career. To continue, in chronological order, to instance the more outstanding sonneteers would be to anticipate the lists which follow shortly (see page 123). Briefly, then, it is the opinion of the author of this study that

once the American sonnet had passed out of its apprentice years and been given the example of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, it became a serious rival, both in bulk and in artistic worth, of its English contemporary. George Henry Boker and Lloyd Mifflin, for example, both wrote sonnets to an extent and with a technical skill and emotional fidelity and intensity comparable to those of Wordsworth. There are few individual sonnets in nineteenth century English literature of greater distinction than Longfellow's *Nature,* Lizette Woodworth Reese's *Tears,* or Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Euclid Alone Has Looked on Beauty Bare.* It is doubtful if any modern English sonneteer outranks Edwin Arlington Robinson.

Nor must any of this be construed into a statement that American sonnet poetry is uniformly excellent. Quite the reverse is the truth. The great bulk of American sonnet verse is commonplace,—suffering greatly, as does so much of all poetry, both American and English, from obviousness and sentimentality. One feels, after having read volumes of this sonnet poetry, the force of these lines by Edwin Arlington Robinson:

> . . . . . these little sonnet men,
> Who fashion, in a shrewd mechanic way,
> Songs without souls, that flicker for a day,
> To vanish in irrevocable night.[1]

Our second question concerns itself with any noticeable changes in the form of the sonnet during the century and a half of its use by American authors. A careful reading of thousands of sonnets written during this period has convinced the author that no tangible development has taken place. Strictly considered, what development in the form of the sonnet is possible, at this late date, without the result's ceasing to be a sonnet? A number of different Italian verse forms were undoubtedly modified or combined by various poets, Italian, French, and English, until they became the normal Italian and English forms we know today. Milton first successfully ignored the pause between the octave and the sestet, and certainly gave the

[1] "Collected Poems," 1922, p. 93.

Italian sonnet a new impetus. Other poets have attempted to fuse the Italian and the English forms into such compromise or hybrid forms as will be noted hereafter. But there the possibilities of development seem to have stopped. These changes left intact the fundamental structure of the sonnet as a prosodic form, i. e., fourteen lines of five-stress verse, arranged according to some definite scheme of four to seven rimes, and, in general, treating one idea only, in a more or less logical manner. These orthodox Petrarchan, Miltonic, Shakespearean, and Compromise sonnet forms existed before American sonnet writing began, and their use is no more characteristic of one period of our literature than of another. No possible interpretation of the tables which follow could be made to show any significant attitude toward a particular form or forms at any particular time. The pleasure of the writer most often determines the form into which he casts his sonnet material. Quite a number of what their authors choose to call sonnets may be found of fifteen lines, or with one or more lines hexameters. But they are not properly developments of the sonnet, because they are not sonnets at all. With one or two exceptions, e. g., *Silence,* by Edgar Allan Poe, such poems have not been included in this study. With all its flexibility, the sonnet is, after all, a definite verse form, like the Spenserian stanza or the heroic couplet. There may, in the future, within the narrow compass of fourteen decasyllables of limited rime scheme, develop a new form, just as the Miltonic sonnet grew out of the normal Petrarchan. But no such development has taken place during the century and a half which constitutes the sonnet history of American literature.

A contemplation of this large body of sonnet poetry quite naturally suggests our third question. How many of the long list of American poets who used the form did so because they felt impelled to, and how many used it merely as a universally known and convenient technical exercise? It must be confessed that mere metrical skill seems by many to have been regarded as a sufficient qualification for an indulgence in the pastime of sonnet writing. Many hundreds of the sonnets listed here can

be dismissed as conscientious prosodic exercises, but nothing more. Many hundreds more are not successful even as prosodic exercises. The large number of sonnets so loosely constructed that they failed to fall into the Italian, English, or Compromise groups (see pages 143 and 144) shows clearly what little calling many of their writers had to the sonnet as a form of poetic expression. Whether the cause was impatience, indifference, or incompetence, the fact remains that about one-seventh of the approximately seven thousand sonnets considered in this paper were of a more or less irregular pattern, many of them bearing the name *sonnet* only by courtesy.

These statements are made, moreover, with a very reasonable standard of sonnet excellence behind them. The thousands of Italian sonnets read in preparation for this study were not contrasted with a theoretical Petrarchan sonnet of strict sense division between octave and sestet, nor were they held to be conformable to the wave of flow and ebb postulated by Watts-Duncan. Furthermore, the English sonnet was accepted as having equal validity with the Italian; the author not at all agreeing with Mark Pattison, who asserted that ". . . the so-called sonnets of Shakespeare are not sonnets at all, . . . but fourteen line stanzas."[1]

The standard which the author tried to keep constantly in mind finds its best expression in these words by John Ashcroft Noble:

> I do not think it absolutely essential that it should be an utterance of one thought or emotion, for within bounds one thought may be opposed by another, and one emotion set against its opposite; but it is essential that the impression left by the sonnet as a whole shall be thoroughly homogeneous—that as it approaches its close the varying threads, if there have been such, should be twined together, and that the reader should be made to feel that the whole commends, amalgamates, and glorifies all the parts.[2]

In other words, waiving the finely drawn and entirely theoretical criteria that have appeared from time to time in discus-

[1] "The Sonnets of John Milton," London, 1892, Intro., p. 34.
[2] "The Sonnet in England and Other Essays," London, 1893, pp. 9-10.

sions of the sonnet form, the writer has expected merely this of a good sonnet: that it be a concise and homogeneous treatment of an idea or emotion adapted to such a treatment in the narrow compass of fourteen five-stress lines.

Such a happy medium between strict rigidity and too great a flexibility seems, in general, to have been the conception of the sonnet held by most of America's successful sonneteers. One of the best of contemporary poets writes:

> I have used it on occasions when the emotion I wished to express was fairly simple and well-unified,—when, to put it otherwise, sharpness of definition and conciseness of statement seemed to be more desirable than elaborate description of the emotion from several angles. I find nothing constricting in the arbitrary limitations of the sonnet . . . for the simple reason that I never attempt a sonnet unless I am already vaguely aware that the thing I am about to say is, by its inherent nature, suited to the sonnet form, rather than to free-verse, the ballad, or some other medium.[1]

Any attempt, in the light of the foregoing remarks, to group categorically the more than two hundred poets here considered into those who were essentially sonneteers, thinking sonnet material in an intuitively sonnet manner, and those who wrote their fourteen line poems with a surface regard to technical accuracy, or even with little of that, but with scant innate feeling for the genius of the form, would be as foolish as it would be arbitrary. But of the place of certain writers there would be no doubt. Among our instinctive sonneteers would certainly be placed: Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Joseph Auslander, Arlo Bates, George Henry Boker, Witter Bynner, Madison Cawein, Gladys Cromwell, Olive Tilford Dargan, Julia Stockton Dinsmore, Glenn Ward Dresbach, Arthur Davison Ficke, Robert Frost, Richard Watson Gilder, Louise Imogen Guiney, Caroline Hazard, Sophie Jewett, Thomas S. Jones, Jr., William Ellery Leonard, George Cabot Lodge, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Amy Lowell, James Russell Lowell, Lloyd Mifflin, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Charles Leonard Moore, David Morton, Louise Chandler Moulton, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Ed-

[1] Arthur Davison Ficke, letter to the author.

win Arlington Robinson, George Santayana, George Sterling, Sara Teasdale, Edith Matilda Thomas, Arthur Upson, John Hall Wheelock, Clement Wood, George Woodberry, and Elinor Wylie.[1]

Not all of the sonnets of these poets are good. But the general technical excellence, the constant sense of sonnet competence, added to an output generous enough to justify these conclusions, entitle them to rank as America's real sonneteers. Sonnets as good as many, and better than some written by these men and women, are abundant in our literature, but they are the work of poets who in general, as sonneteers, are merely competent craftsmen, or who have written too few sonnets to warrant any definite conclusions. In the first group, which consists of those who, in the opinion of this writer, have written some sonnets of outstanding excellence, and a number of others of a quite ordinary level, belong, among others: Stephen Vincent Benét, William Rose Benét, Florence Earle Coates, Helen Gray Cone, Babette Deutsch, Edgar Fawcett, Theodosia Garrison, Herman Hagedorn, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Helen Hunt Jackson, Joyce Kilmer, Lucy Larcom, Emma Lazarus, J. Corson Miller, Clinton Scollard, Edward Rowland Sill, William Gilmore Simms, Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, Henry Theodore Tuckerman, and Jones Very. Of these writers it seems safe to say, whatever may have been their devotion to the sonnet form, and whatever relation their work in that form may bear to the nature and bulk of their poetry in general, that they are not primarily gifted in the sonnet form. The Benéts, Holmes, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Clinton Scollard, for instance, have obviously done better work in other fields.

The other group consists of those who have won undoubted distinction as poets, but who, as sonneteers, seem of definitely minor importance because of the very limited number of sonnets they have written. In this list could be placed, without much hesitation: William Cullen Bryant, Sidney Lanier, Percy

[1] This list, like those that follow, is in an alphabetical order.

Mackaye, Edgar Allan Poe, Thomas Buchanan Read, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Bayard Taylor, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Nathaniel Parker Willis.

It was with much hesitation and rereading of his notes that the writer made these dangerous categorical statements. Not one of them is he prepared to defend further than that it represents an honest opinion arrived at after the perusal of every sonnet and much of the other verse of the authors named. The mere insistence with which some names and some sonnets recur to a mind unavoidably blurred by such a wealth of material, and the utter lack of impression made by dozens of other authors, and hundreds of their sonnets, is, in itself, no mean criterion. No one, for instance, having read once and hastily Arthur Davison Ficke's *I Am in Love with High Far-Seeing Places* can fail to remember the true sonnet impulse of it. On the other hand, one may read conscientiously the three score sonnets of Katherine Lee Bates without once feeling that surge and lift and final calm that mark the Italian sonnet at its best. Almost any of the "eagle" sonnets of Clement Wood have the true ring of the English sonnet, with its climactic couplet at the close; whereas the English sonnets of Jones Very seem, in spite of their technical accuracy, barren of that emotional impulse which is fundamental to the sonnet in its highest form.

The fourth and final question that would suggest itself to any student of a hundred and fifty years of American sonnet history is this: Are there discernible, in the course of this long period, any "trends" or tendencies in the use of the sonnet as distinct from any development of its form? Has the sonnet been put to any new uses? Has it become more or less rigid? How has it been regarded by the more frankly experimental of recent and contemporary verse writers?

As has been said before, the outward form of the sonnet has remained fixed. The American sonnets written in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century and those written in the first quarter of the twentieth are alike in prosodic execution. And it is not dismissing the matter too briefly to say that until recently they remained equally stable in spirit and in subject matter.

Certain outstanding sonneteers come to have, to an ear and mind grown familiar to them by constant reading, an individuality of their own. No one would ever attribute a sonnet from Boker's *Sequence on Profane Love* to Longfellow, just as the latter's numerous sonnets on themes of a literary nature stand out, by reason of a sureness of technique and an adroitness of phraseology, from the hundreds of lesser sonnets similar to them in form and subject. Some of our earliest sonnets, those of David Humphreys or Samuel Low, for instance, do have a distinctly eighteenth century style, which would readily distinguish them from the great corpus of our sonnet poetry. But in the main, the average sonnet of the beginning of the nineteenth century is identical with one written at the end of the century in style and diction. The sonnet, except in the hands of those who were intuitively sonneteers, suffered from the weakness of all definitely artificial forms,—colorlessness and conventionalism.

Yet many, if not all, of the nineteenth century sonnet writers aimed above mere technical proficiency, at an intangible something that for want of a better name can only be called "sonnet diction." The reach for it is evident in hundreds of sonnets utterly wihout any other distinction. The subtle harmonies of Shakespeare's dramatic verse at its best are no more definitely established as a diction to be aimed at by all who write in that medium than is the clearly perceptible "manner" of the great sonnet. A combination of worthy theme and dignified restraint of language is an integral part of American sonnet tradition from Allston to Robinson. Few of the greatest of our sonneteers have broken with it to this day, and those who, like Edna St. Vincent Millay, have done so in part have most decidedly done it with a difference. Austerity without pomposity; splendor without ostentation; imagery without conceit; depth rather than profundity; passion rather than eroticism—these seem to be characteristic of the American as of the English sonnet. The difference between the master and the artisan is here one of degree rather than of kind.

But side by side with this traditional sonnet there has, in recent years, come into being a less reticent, a less formal sonnet, with a different concept of what is the proper subject and diction of the form. The author of this study wrote a personal letter to every living American sonnet writer of any importance whatever in a frank attempt to ascertain what, if any, tendencies he saw in its use in contemporary letters. These inquiries were received with uniform graciousness, and an unexpected patience and completeness of answer. The note more frequently sounded than any other was precisely this note of a growing restiveness under the restraints of the traditional sonnet, and a tendency to make it conform in matter, style, and spirit with a large body of recent poetry.

Babette Deutsch: The sonnet has become less austere, less pompous, without being less splendid, although on occasion it lapses into frivolity. . . . In other ways, too, the sonnet shares the spoils of contemporary poetry, as in a more flexible cadence, a finer use of assonantal rhymes. . . . Concrete images, taken from our common life, enter into it more readily than before, and, I think, to the benefit of this narrow form.

William Rose Benét: If there is any trend in the present writing of the sonnet, I should say it was to make it the vehicle for expression more colloquial and fantastic than formerly.

Clement Wood: 1. Liberal use of near rhyme and assonance, instead of accurate rhymes.

2. Liberal use of more broken and fragmentary rhythm than the lock step iambic regularity of the past.[1]

David Morton finds the chief characteristic of the twentieth century sonnet in its informality.

The sonnet after Milton, at any rate, was reserved for such occasions as demanded formality of speech, when they did not demand positive grandeur. . . . The twentieth century poet [is unwilling] to wait for a sublime subject before using the sonnet form, and . . . to put on surplice and robes of manner and language when he *does* use the form . . . I would not wish to give the impression that the note of "high seriousness" for which the sonnet was reserved in the preceding cen-

[1] From letters to the author.

tury is absent from the sonnets of our day. It is not that nobleness of thought and majesty of language have abandoned the sonnet, but that the form is used less exclusively for these things.[1]

Examples of this contemporary sonnet, with what William Ellery Leonard, one of its most consistent exponents, terms "its new nuances in details of structure, and new materials for its substance," will be found in the collection which follows. These poets, among others, may be noted: Stephen Vincent Benét, Witter Bynner, Donald Evans, Robert Frost, Alfred Kreymborg, William Ellery Leonard, Donald P. Marquis, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Christopher Morley, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Louis Untermeyer, John Van Alstyn Weaver.

It must at once be added that these poets represent this tendency in various degrees of persistence, and, what is still more important, in varying degrees of success. With some, the result is hardly worth the effort. With others, as with Frost, Leonard, Robinson, and Miss Millay, it is often arresting, and never merely smart. Frost's *On a Tree Fallen Across a Road* (page 85), Robinson's *Karma,* and Miss Millay's *If I Should Learn in Some Quite Casual Way* (page 113) are examples of this tendency at its best. And in no case, in the opinion of the writer, do these sonnets represent their authors at their finest. They are definitely not of the great sonnet tradition. In employing their poetic pattern in a new way, they have not succeeded in making it over sufficiently to justify the result. George Santayana compares the sonnet and the quatrain to the orders of Greek architecture as things that are better than anything else that has been devised to serve the same function. Much in American life and thought that was and is noble has been and is being moulded into the Italian and English sonnet forms. Whether it can likewise be fitted to receive the transitory, the trivial, and the colloquial remains to be seen. The research student must duly chronicle every use to which it is put, and have an open mind, whatever may be his personal preferences. The study he makes will become a memory, perhaps, even before

[1] "The Sonnet, Yesterday and Today," p. 31 ff.

the least consequential of the sonnets whose rime schemes he counted and whose authors he catalogued. But the sonnet will go on. Born in Italy, or at least perfected in Italy, as one of the finest fruits of the Renaissance, imported into England and given a new impetus by the greatest of poets, it has been loved and cultivated by almost every poet since, except during the hiatus of the eighteenth century. In America all but a very few of our outstanding poets have used it, many of them supremely well; others, less gifted, but not less earnest, perhaps, have found in its narrow ground a sure retreat for the contemplation of the beauty they saw and an expression of the passion they felt. The books are filled with men's praise of this most tangible, and yet most subtle, of poetic forms. But of all that he has read, the writer thinks this from David Morton, himself one of the most dignified of the younger poets of America, the best, and the most fitting with which to close an introduction to a study of the sonnet in American literature.

Poems in the sonnet form, as in other forms, represent moments at which life reached a passionate intensity, and was translated into speech. Such forms should be read, not as sonnet exhibits, but as poetry, as life itself projected in the living pattern that is literature. The fashion changes, the idiom alters, the technique varies, but back of these transitory things stands the human spirit. That is the presence to be sought, in the sonnet, as elsewhere, and known, there as elsewhere, by a far light that endures, by a breath upon the cheek.[1]

[1] "The Sonnet Yesterday and Today," p. 52.

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY AND ANTHOLOGY

The first American sonneteer seems to have been Colonel David Humphreys, who was born in Derby, Connecticut, in 1752, and who died in New Haven in 1818. He was graduated from Yale with Barlow, Dwight, and Trumbull in 1771, entered the army at the beginning of the Revolutionary War in July, 1776, and in 1780 became a colonel and aide-de-camp to General Washington. Later he went abroad with Franklin, Adams, and Jefferson to negotiate commercial treaties. Still later, 1791-1797, he was minister to Lisbon, and from then on until 1802, minister to Madrid.

Colonel Humphreys wrote twelve irregular sonnets, eight of them occasional in theme. They are found in his *Miscellaneous Works,* N. Y., 1804. In a prefatory note to these sonnets he says:

> Upon lately looking over my papers I found a few sonnets which recalled to recollection some of the feelings with which they were written. It is presumed, the dates and titles will generally point out what shall be sufficient to be known respecting these compositions, without illustration.
>
> New Haven, November, 1802.[1]

These dates can be quite accurately ascertained, by the evidence of the first and last of the twelve sonnets, as falling between July, 1776, and the end of 1799 or the beginning of 1800. *Sonnet I,* here reprinted, was written at the time of his enlistment.

> His buoyant enthusiasm fired his poetic imagination, and as he was leaving to join the army, he addressed [this] sonnet to his college friends at New Haven, with whom he had spent many companionable hours since his school-teaching days.[2]

Sonnet XII, also reprinted, is an elegy written at the death of General Washington, and must have been written shortly after that event, December 14, 1799.

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[1] "Miscellaneous Works," N. Y., 1804, p. 232.

[2] Frank Landon Humphreys: "The Life and Times of David Humphreys," N. Y., 1917, Vol. I, p. 57.

From Madrid, February 22, 1800, he wrote a letter of condolence to Lady Washington, and also read a poem (not the sonnet in question) . . . to an appreciative audience of Spanish Grandees at the American Embassy.[1]

SONNET—I

Addressed to my Friends at Yale College, on my Leaving them to join the Army.

Adieu! thou Yale! where youthful poets dwell,
No more I linger by thy classic stream.
Inglorious ease and sportive songs farewell!
Thou startling clarion! break the sleeper's dream!
And sing, ye bards! the war-inspiring theme.
Heard ye the din of battle? clang of arms?
Saw ye the steel 'mid starry banners beam?
Quick throbs my breast at war's untried alarms,
Unknown pulsations stirr'd by glory's charms.
While dear Columbia calls, no danger awes,
Though certain death to threaten'd chains be join'd.
Though fails this flesh devote to freedom's cause,
Can death subdue th' unconquerable mind?
Or adamantine chains ethereal substance bind?

SONNET—V

ON LIFE

Ere we can think of time—the moment's past—
And straight another since that thought began:
So swift each instant mingles with the last,
The flying *now* exists—no more for man.
With consciousness suspended ev'n by sleep,
To what this phantom, life, then likest seems?
Say thou! whose doubtful being (lost in dreams)
Allows the wilder'd but to wake and weep,
So thoughtless hurried to th' eternal deep!
'Tis like a moon-light vision's airy shade,
A bubble driving down the deep beneath—
Then, ere the bubble burst, the vision fade,
Dissolv'd in air this evanescent breath!
Let man, not mortal, learn true life begins at death.

[1] Ibid, Vol. II, p. 266.

SONNET—XII

On Receiving the News of the Death of General Washington.

Hark! friends! what sobs of sorrow, moans of grief,
On every gale, through every region spread!
Hark! how the western world bewails our chief,
Great Washington, his country's father dead!
Our living light expiring with his breath,
His bright example still illumes our way
Through the dark valley of thy shadow, death!
To realms on high of life without decay.
Faint, he relied on heav'nly help alone,
While conscience cheer'd th' inevitable hour;
When fades the glare of grandeur, pomp of pow'r,
And all the pageantry that gems a throne:
Then from his hallow'd track, who shall entice
Columbia's sons to tread the paths of vice?[1]

The next American sonneteer is Royall Tyler [1757-1826], the author of *The Contrast,* our first comedy, and the second play by an American to be produced in America by a professional company. Tyler's two sonnets are found in *The Spirit of the Farmers' Museum and the Lay Preacher's Gazette,* Walpole, N. H., 1801, under the caption "From the Shop of Messrs. Colon & Spondee." This pseudonym covered the prose of Joseph Dennie and the poetry, chiefly satire and parody, of Royall Tyler.[2]

Tyler's two sonnets are best introduced in his own words:

The plaintive and affected style of Charlotte Smith is familiar, it is supposed, to most readers. Criticism has frowned upon the verbose grief of a sobbing poetess. . . . We insert the following as a pleasant

[1] "Miscellaneous Works," N. Y., 1804, pp. 232, 234, and 238.

[2] See numerous references to this literary partnership in "Joseph Dennie and His Circle," by Harold Milton Ellis, University of Texas, 1915.

See also Joseph T. Buckingham: "Specimens of Newspaper Literature," Boston, 1852, p. 177.

introduction to an attack soon to be made upon the above sighing sonneteer from the Shop of Colon and Spondee.[1]

ON A RUINED HOUSE IN A ROMANTIC COUNTRY

And this reft house is that the which he built,
Lamented Jack! and here his malt he pil'd,
Cautious in vain! These rats that squeak so wild,
Squeak, not unconscious of their father's guilt.
Did ye not see her gleaming through the glade!
Belike, 't was she, the maiden all forlorn.
What tho' she milk no cow with crumpled horn,
Yet, aye, she haunts the dale where erst she stray'd;
And, aye, beside her stalks her amorous knight!
Still on his thighs their wonted brogues are worn,
And thro' those brogues, still tatter'd and betorn,
His hindward charms gleam an unearthly white;
As when thro' broken clouds at night's high noon
Peeps in fair fragments forth the full orb'd harvest moon.

SONNET TO AN OLD MOUSER

Child of lubricious art, of sanguine sport!
Of pangful mirth! sweet ermin'd sprite!
Who lov'st, with silent, velvet step, to court
The bashful bosom of the night.
Whose elfin eyes can pierce night's sable gloom,
And witch her fairy prey with guile,
Who sports fell frolic o'er the grisly tomb,
And gracest death with dimpling smile!
Daughter of ireful mirth, sportive in rage,
Whose joy should shine in sculptur'd bas relief
Like Patience, in rapt Shakespeare's deathless page,
Smiling in marble at wan grief.
Oh, come, and teach me all thy barb'rous joy,
To sport with sorrow first, and then destroy.[2]

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[1] Charlotte Smith (1749-1806) published in Philadelphia in 1787 an edition of her "Elegiac Sonnets."
"The Spirit of the Farmers' Museum," p. 80.

[2] "The Spirit of the Farmer's Museum and Lay Preacher's Gazette," Walpole, N. H., 1801, pp. 80 and 291.

Samuel Low [1765- ?] is the author of a collection of poems, in two volumes, published in New York in 1800. In that collection are twenty-two sonnets, Shakespearean and irregular, of a sentimental or reflective nature. The two reprinted here are thoroughly representative of his work.

TO A VIOLET

Though not the gaudy Tulip's drap'ry fine,
Yet thou, fair plant, canst Tyre's rich purple boast;
The beauty of the amethyst is thine;
Thy neat and simple garb delights me most;
Unseen and shadowy forms of tiny size,
Delicious dew-drops from thy surface sip,
Feast on thy charms their microscopic eyes,
And breathe thy sweets, as o'er thy leaves they trip.
Emblem of innocence and modest worth,
Who lov'st the eye of rude remark to shun,
Whose lovely, lowly form still tends to earth,
Unlike the flower which courts the mid-day sun;
Thou seem'st, sweet flow'ret, of his beam afraid;—
Thus merit ever loves and seeks the shade.

TO THE GENIUS OF POETRY

Genius of tuneful verse! inspired by whom,
Divine Maeonides in numbers first
Dawn'd on a world o'ercast with mental gloom,
And strains sublime to barb'rous Greece rehearsed;
Spirit of song! from whose Castilian fount
The Mantuan poet sweet instruction drew;
With piercing ken to whose Aonian mount,
Once Albion's bards on eagle pinions flew;
Though far aloof thy vot'ry stretch his wing,
That o'er no classic land presumes to soar,
Him hast thou taught in plaintive strains to sing,
To feel thy solace, and thy power adore;
And, spite of envy's futile venom, thou
Hast placed a leaf of laurel on his brow.[1]

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1800, vol. II, pp. 87 and 98.

Richard Bingham Davis [1771-1799] has three sonnets in his *Poems,* N. Y., 1807.

TO FELICIA

When, through the dark damp mists of tedious night,
Sweet lucid tints announce the cheerful day,
Gay beats the enthusiast heart that hails the ray
Illuminating scenes of new delight.
When, the long dreary reign of Winter past,
The landscape brightens, and the wild flowers bloom;
When every gale wafts music and perfume,
Rich is the fancy's treasure, sweet the soul's repast.
Such, in the circle where Felicia shines,
Are Friendship's feelings on her blest return;
Friendship—who for her loss no more repines,
But bids each anxious bosom cease to mourn.
To hail Felicia is our sweet employ,
And every sense and every heart is joy.[1]

In an anonymous volume, *American Poems Selected and Original,* Vol. I, Litchfield, Conn., 1793, appears (p. 249) a very respectable sonnet signed "Birtha, May 25th, 1791," together with the note that the sonnet was reprinted from *The Gazette of the United States.*

SONNET

The Lord of light has journey'd down the sky,
And bath'd his coursers in the foaming wave;
The twinkling star of Even, too, hastes to lave
Her silver form, and vanish from my eye.
Now dusky twilight flings her sombre shade,
O'er the bright beauties of the silent vale;
The aspen trembles not, the verdant blade
No longer nodding answers to the gale.
Come sweet Reflection! hither pensive maid
Direct thy wandering steps, and on this stone,
Worn by no traveller's feet, with moss o'ergrown,
Repose with me in solitude's deep shade.
Then shall I know the height of human bliss,
And taste the joy of other worlds in this.

[1] L. c., p. 141.

The *Works in Prose and Verse* of Robert Treat Paine [1773-1810], published in Boston in 1804, contain six sonnets.

ELEGIAC SONNET

Here sleep'st thou, Man of Soul! Thy spirit flown,
How dark and tenantless its desert clay!
Cold is that heart, which throbbed at sorrow's moan,
Untuned that tongue that charmed the social day.
Where now the Wit, by generous roughness graced?
Or Friendship's accent, kindling as it fell?
Or Bounty's stealing foot, whose step untraced
Had watched pale Want, and stored her famished cell?
Alas! 'tis all thou art! whose vigorous mind,
Inspiring Force to Truth and Feeling gave,
Whose rich resources equal power combined,
The gay to brighten, and instruct the grave!
Farewell! Adieu! Sweet peace thy vigils keep;
For Pilgrim Virtue sojourns here to weep.[1]

Peter Bayley [1778?-1823] published in Philadelphia in 1804 a small volume of poems, sixteen of which are well-constructed Italian sonnets, of a quiet, reflective nature.

ON HEARING AN EOLIAN HARP

Sure 'tis the voice of choired saints that flows
Along the billows of the softened breeze . . .
And now, in falls and dying symphonies,
So sweet it glides, that forth my rapt soul goes
To join those hymnings, ta'en from all her woes.
Yet once more, and once more, ye minstrelsies
Of power, my stormy spirit to appease,
With some dissolving dream my thoughts compose . . .
Again your strains float, sinking on the wind,
Soft, wild, and mournful all; now melt away,
Faintly perceived, like some expiring ray
Of memory that trembles o'er the mind,
Lovely in its departure, still enshrined
As the blest relic of a happy day.[2]

[1] L. c., p. 292.
[2] "Poems," Philadelphia, 1804, p. 95.

In Washington Allston [1779-1843] we come to a poet of more substantial merit, although it is doubtful if his best work was done in the sonnet form. *Sylphs of the Seasons,* Boston, 1813, contains six sonnets on topics suggested by his activities as an artist. *Lectures on Art and Poems,* 1850, contains these six and seven others. Allston's sonnets, although irregular in structure, are arresting by the simple dignity of their diction.

He painted a picture of Coleridge, and had these lines written of him by Robert Southey in *A Vision of Judgment:*

> . . . . . he, who returning
> Rich in praise to his native shores, hath left a remembrance
> Long to be honored and loved on the banks of the Thames
> and the Tiber.

Allston's best sonnet, perhaps, is the one he wrote on the death of Coleridge.

SONNET ON THE LATE S. T. COLERIDGE

> And thou art gone, most loved, most honored friend!
> No, nevermore thy gentle voice shall blend
> With air of Earth its pure ideal tones,
> Binding in one, as with harmonious zones,
> The heart and intellect. And I no more
> Shall with thee gaze on that unfathomed deep,
> The Human Soul,—as when, pushed off the shore,
> Thy mystic bark would through the darkness sweep,
> Itself the while so bright! For oft we seemed
> As on some starless sea,—all dark above,
> All dark below,—yet, onward as we drove,
> To plough up light that ever round us streamed.
> But he who mourns is not as one bereft
> Of all he loved. Thy living Truths are left.[1]

Henry Pickering [1781-1838] wrote sixteen well-constructed sonnets, twelve in the Italian form. The most interesting is reprinted.

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[1] "Lectures on Art and Poems," N. Y., 1850, p. 346.

AMERICAN PAINTERS

Thou sleep'st in marble now, O West! still first
Upon the roll of fame thy name appears;
Thy name, decreed to reach the latest years,
Despite the taint of envious breath accurst.
And Copley, too, thy spirit proud hast burst!—
But turn we to the living: bright compeers.
Our Stuart, Allston! ripe of age, time sears
Not that; this burns with an immortal thirst.
Who next shall follow in the march of time?
See Trumbull, anxious for a deathless name!
See Vanderlyn, see ardent Sully, climb!
And Leslie, Newton, tread the paths of fame!
Urge then the generous race, ye chosen few;
And let Apelles, Raphael, live in you.[1]

Richard Henry Dana [1787-1879] wrote but one sonnet.

TO A GARDEN FLOWER SENT ME BY A LADY

No, not in woods, nor fells, nor pastures wild,
Nor left alone to changeful nature's care,
You opened on the light and breathed the air;
But one with blush like thine, and look as mild
As dewy morn, with love all undefiled,
Chose out a kindly spot, and made thy bed
Safe from the cruel blast and heedless tread,
And watched thy birth, and took thee for her child;
And human hands solicitous have trained
Thy slender stalk, and eyes on thee have dwelt
Radiant with thought, and human feelings rained
Into thy bosom, e'en till thou hast felt
That through thy life a human virtue ran;
And now art come to greet thy fellow man.[2]

Sarah Josepha Hale [1788-1879] wrote *The Empire of Woman—A Series of (5) Sonnets.* The first one of the sequence is reprinted.

[1] "Ruins of Paestum and Other Compositions in Verse," Salem, Mass., 1822, p. 71.
[2] "Poems and Prose Writings," N. Y., 1850, Vol. I, p. 133.

WOMAN'S EMPIRE DEFINED

The outward world, for rugged toil designed,
Where Evil from true Good the crown hath riven,
Hath been to men's dominion ever given;
But woman's empire, holier, more refined,
Moulds, moves, and sways the fallen yet God-breathed mind,
Lifting the earth-crushed heart to hope and heaven.
As plants put forth to summer's gentle wind,
And 'neath the sweet, soft light of starry even,
Those treasures which the tyrant winter's sway
Could never wrest from nature,—so the soul
Will woman's sweet and tender power obey;
Thus doth her summer smile its strength control;
Her love sows flowers along life's thorny way;
Her star-bright faith leads up towards heaven's goal.[1]

Richard Henry Wilde [1789-1847] is best known in our literature for his studies in the life and times of Tasso. The sonnets which he translated from this Italian poet have not been considered in this study. He wrote two original sonnets.

TO A MOCKING BIRD

Wing'd mimic of the woods! thou motley fool!
Who shall thy gay buffoonery describe?
Thine ever ready notes of ridicule
Pursue thy fellows still with jest and gibe.
Wit, sophist, songster, Yorick of thy tribe,
Thou sportive satirist of Nature's school;
To thee the palm of scoffing we ascribe,
Arch-mocker and mad Abbot of Misrule!
For such thou art by day—but all night long
Thou pour'st a soft, sweet, pensive, solemn strain,
As if thou didst in this thy moonlight song
Like to the melancholy Jacques complain,
Musing on falsehood, folly, vice, and wrong,
And sighing for thy motley coat again.[2]

[1] "Three Hours, or the Vigil of Love," Phila., 1848, p. 86.
[2] R. W. Griswold: "Poets and Poetry of America," Phila., 1842, p. 79.

Lydia Huntley Sigourney [1791-1865] seems to have written but one sonnet.

TO THE EVENING PRIMROSE

Pale Primrose! lingering for the evening star
To bless thee with its beam,—like some fair child
Who, ere he rests on Morpheus' downy car,
Doth wait his mother's blessing, pure and mild,
To hallow his gay dream. His red lips breathe
The prompted prayer, fast by that parent's knee,
Even as thou rear'st thy sweetly fragrant wreath
To matron Evening, while she smiles on thee.
Go to thy rest, pale flower! the star hath shed
His benison upon thy bosom fair,
The dews of summer bathe thy pensive head,
And weary man forgets his daily care;—
Sleep on, my rose! till morning gilds the sky
And bright Aurora's kiss unseal thy trembling eye.[1]

William Cullen Bryant [1794-1878] wrote nine sonnets in all, one a translation from the Portuguese.

All of these but one were written between 1824-1828, and not until 1877 was the last one, *In Memory of John Lothrop Motley,* composed. Descriptive or reflective in nature, they are one with the rest of his poetry. Seven of Bryant's nine sonnets are irregular in construction.

MUTATION

They talk of short-lived pleasure—be it so—
Pain dies as quickly: stern hard-featured pain
Expires, and lets her weary prisoner go.
The fiercest agonies have shortest reign;
And after dreams of horror, comes again
The welcome morning with its rays of peace.
Oblivion, softly wiping out the stain,
Makes the strong secret pangs of pain to cease.

[1] "Poems," Philadelphia, 1846, p. 221.

Remorse is virtue's root; its fair increase
Are fruits of innocence and blessedness:
Thus joy o'erborne and bound, doth still release
His young limbs from the chains that round him press.
Weep not that the world changes—did it keep
A stable, changeless state, 't were cause indeed to weep.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY

Sleep, Motley! with the great of ancient days,
Who wrote for all the years that yet shall be;
Sleep with Herodotus, whose name and praise
Have reached the isles of earth's remotest sea;
Sleep, while, defiant of the slow decays
Of time, thy glorious writings speak for thee,
And in the answering heart of millions raise
The generous zeal for Right and Liberty.
And should the day o'ertake us when, at last,
The silence that, ere yet a human pen
Had traced the slenderest record of the past—
Hushed the primeval languages of men—
Upon our English tongue its spell shall cast,
Thy memory shall perish only then.[1]

No sonnets by Joseph Rodman Drake [1795-1820] are found in *The Culprit Fay and Other Poems,* 1835, which purports to be Drake's complete verse. The sonnet reprinted here is quoted by Duyckinck as by Drake, with the note that this and several other poems were not included in the 1835 edition. Thorough search has revealed no earlier source.

SONNET

Is thy heart weary of unfeeling men,
And chilled with the world's ice? Then come with me,
And I will bring thee to a pleasant glen
Lovely and lonely. There we'll sit, unviewed
By scoffing eye; and let our hearts beat free
With their own mutual throb. For wild and rude
The access is, and none will there intrude,

[1] "Poetical Works," N. Y., 1908, pp. 70 and 399.

To poison our free thoughts, and mar our solitude!
Such scenes move not their feelings—for they hold
No fellowship with nature's loneliness;
The frozen wave reflects not back the gold
And crimson flushes of the sunset hour;
The rock lies cold in sunshine—not the power
Of heaven's bright orb can clothe its barrenness.[1]

James Gates Percival [1795-1856] wrote twenty-five sonnets of reflection, the best one being the one reprinted here.

A SONNET

Whence? Whither? Where?—a taper point of light,
My life and world—the infinite around;
A sea, not even highest thought can sound;
A formless void; unchanging, endless night.
In vain the struggling spirit aims its flight
To the empyrean, seen as is a star,
Sole glimmering through the hazy night afar,—
In vain it beats its wings with daring might.
What yonder gleams? What heavenly shapes arise
From out the bodiless waste? Behold the dawn,
Sent from on high! Uncounted ages gone,
Burst full and glorious on my wondering eyes:
Sun-clear the world around, and far away,
A boundless future sweeps in golden day.[2]

George Hill [1796-1871], in *Titania's Banquet and Other Poems,* N. Y., 1870, published fifteen sonnets, all entirely irregular.

Amos Bronson Alcott's [1799-1888] forty-six sonnets appear in *Sonnets and Canzonets,* a volume published in Boston in 1882. Not one is of an arresting character. Eight of them are legitimate Shakespearean sonnets; the others are irregular. The one reprinted is evidently directed to Thoreau, although none of Alcott's sonnets bears a definite title.

[1] Duyckinck: "Cyclopedia of American Literature," Phila., 1881, Vol. I, p. 930.
[2] "Poems," Boston, 1859, Vol. II, p. 236.

SONNET

Who nearer Nature's life would truly come
Must nearest come to him of whom I speak;
He all kinds knew,—the vocal and the dumb;
Masterful in genius was he, and unique,
Patient, sagacious, tender, frolicsome.
This Concord Pan would oft his whistle take,
And forth from wood and fen, field, hill, and lake,
Trooping around him, in their several guise,
The shy inhabitants their haunts forsake:
Then he, like Esop, man would satirize,
Hold up the image wild to clearest view
Of undiscerning manhood's puzzled eyes,
And mocking say, "Lo! mirrors here for you:
Be true to these, if ye would be more wise." [1]

James Lawson [1799-1880] is the author of five sonnets. The one quoted has unmistakable vigor and a real historic interest.

SONNET—ANDREW JACKSON 1837

Come, stand the nearest to thy country's sire,
Thou fearless man, of uncorrupted heart;
Well worthy undivided praise thou art,
And 't will be thine, when slumbers party ire,
Raised, by the voice of freemen, to a height
Sublimer far than kings-by-birth may claim!
Thy stern, unselfish spirit dared the right,
And battled 'gainst the wrong. Thy holiest aim
Was freedom, in the largest sense, despite
Misconstrued motives, and unmeasured blame.
Above deceit, in purpose firm, and pure;
Just to opposers, and to friends sincere,
Thy worth shall with thy country's name endure,
And greener grow thy fame through every coming year.[2]

Robert Montgomery Bird [1803-1854] seems to have written but one sonnet.

[1] "Sonnets and Canzonets," Boston, 1882, p. 119.
[2] "Poems," N. Y., 1857, p. 17.

MAY

She opes her eyes, and oh, my bosom's swell!
When like some timid angel peeping forth
From the dim gate of paradise to earth,
The soul looks forth from each seraphic cell,
Bright, tender, rapt, incomprehensible!
She opes her eyes, for mischief or for mirth,
And the sweet light, as at a planet's birth,
Shines on my faltering spirit as a spell.
Perhaps she laughs in secret, when she views
The tumult of my rapture, and the endeavor
To still the throb that fills my eyes with dews,
And makes my cheek to flush, and my lips quiver:
Perhaps she knows not how the gaze subdues,
But opes her eyes, and sees me hers forever.[1]

George Washington Bethune [1805-1862] is the author of four sonnets.

William Lloyd Garrison [1805-1879], during an imprisonment in Baltimore in May, 1830, for his anti-slavery activities, wrote this sonnet on the wall of the jail. Almost all of his thirty-seven sonnets are occasional or eulogistic in nature.

FREEDOM OF THE MIND

High walls and huge the Body may confine,
And iron grates obstruct the prisoner's gaze,
And massive bolts may baffle his design,
And vigilant keepers watch his devious ways;
Yet scorns th' immortal Mind this base control!
No chains can bind it, and no cell enclose:
Swifter than light, it flies from pole to pole,
And, in a flash, from earth to heaven it goes!
It leaps from mount to mount—from vale to vale
It wanders, plucking honeyed fruits and flowers;
It visits home, to hear the fireside tale,
Or in sweet converse pass the joyous hours:

[1] "New York Mirror," Vol. IX, p. 360 (May 12, 1832).

'Tis up before the sun, roaming afar,
And, in its watches, wearies every star![1]

Emma C. Embury [1806-1863] wrote twenty-four pleasing sonnets.

ON RECEIVING A POT OF VIOLETS IN MIDWINTER

The cloud-flecked sunshine of an April day,
The changeful beauty of its lights and shades,
Falling athwart the newly-herbaged glades,
Or marking out some tiny streamlet's way;
A pleasant fancy of each pleasant thing
That comes when storms have vanished from the sky;
A vision of the fairy-footed Spring
Stooping to kiss the Violet's half-shut eye;
These are the dreams that paint my chamber walls
With many a woodland haunt in wintry hour;
And sweet bird-voices and low insect-calls
Seem to make musical each sylvan bower;
Such genial influence on my spirit falls,
Waked by the faint, sweet perfume of a flower.[2]

William Gilmore Simms [1806-1870] wrote sixty-one sonnets, forty-four of which are entirely irregular in rime scheme. Almost all of Simm's sonnets are reflections upon life or upon the influence of natural objects.

SOLACE OF THE WOODS

Woods, waters, have a charm to soothe the ear,
When common sounds have vexed it; when the day
Grows sultry, and the crowd is in thy way,
And working in thy soul much coil and care,
Betake thee to the forest: in the shade
Of pines, and by the side of purling streams
That prattle all their secrets in their dreams,
Unconscious of a listener—unafraid—
Thy soul shall feel their freshening, and the truth

[1] "Sonnets and Other Poems," Boston, 1843, p. 68.
[2] "Poems," Cambridge, Mass., 1869, p. 355.

Of nature then, reviving in thy heart,
Shall bring thee the best feelings of thy youth,
When in all natural joys thy joy had part,
Ere lucre and the narrowing toils of trade
Had turned thee to the thing thou wast not made.[1]

Elizabeth Oakes Smith [1806-1893] wrote thirty-seven sonnets in all.

AN INCIDENT

A simple thing, yet chancing as it did,
When life was bright with its illusive dreams,
A pledge and promise seemed beneath it hid.
The ocean lay before me, tinged with beams
That lingering draped the west, a wavering stir;
And at my feet down fell a worn gray quill:
An eagle, high above the darkling fir,
With steady flight, seemed there to take his fill
Of that pure ether breathed by him alone.
O noble bird! why didst thou loose for me
Thy eagle plume? still unessayed, unknown,
Must be that pathway fearless winged by thee:
I ask it not, no lofty flight be mine;
I would not soar like thee, in loneliness to pine![2]

Elizabeth S. Swift [1806-1893], first cousin to Leigh Hunt, wrote at least two sonnets. They are found in Read and Hunt.

Nathaniel Parker Willis [1806-1867] seems to have written but four sonnets. Three are irregular; the fourth is Shakespearean.

SONNET

Storm had been on the hills. The day had worn
As if a sleep upon the hours had crept;
And the dark clouds that gather'd at the morn
In dull, impenetrable masses slept,
And the wet leaves hung droopingly, and all

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1853, Vol. II, p. 12.
[2] "Poems," N. Y., 1845, p. 100.

Was like the mournful aspect of a pall.
Suddenly, on the horizon's edge, a blue
And delicate line, as of a pencil, lay,
And, as it wider and intenser grew,
The darkness removed silently away.
And, with the splendor of a God, broke through
The perfect glory of the departing day.
So, when the stormy pilgrimage is o'er,
Will light upon the dying Christian pour.[1]

Thomas Holley Chivers [1807-1858] wrote nine irregular sonnets of a gentle, reflective nature.

In Henry Wadsworth Longfellow [1807-1882] we have one of the supreme sonneteers of America. It may be that his sonnets constitute his most intrinsically excellent contribution to his lyric verse. To one who has been reading scores of sonnets by writers before and contemporary with Longfellow, the change when one turnes to his sonnets is immediately apparent.

An interesting comment on contemporary critical values is offered in the fact that Lee, in his collection of American sonnets in Hunt's *Book of the Sonnet,* gives six times as much space to a discussion of the sonnets of James Gates Percival as he does to those of Longfellow. This was in 1867, at which time Lonfellow's Dante sonnets had been written.

In the Cambridge edition of his works, there are sixty-two original sonnets, and twenty-two which are translations from French, Italian, or Spanish. These latter sonnets are not considered in this study.

Longfellow's sonnets are all regularly Petrarchan. He wrote no irregular or Shakespearean sonnets. Of the sixty-two sonnets, no less than fifty-one of them have the sestet constructed *cde cde,* the form which is by far the most widely used in our literature. Eight more of his sestets are *cdcdcd,* which is the second most widely employed form in American sonnet history.

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1868, p. 251.

In other words, Longfellow, the first great American sonneteer, and to this day one of the two or three greatest, foreshadowed in his own personal appraisal of the various possible sestets of the Italian sonnet, the collective preference of several hundred American poets.

In theme, Longfellow's sonnets are very diverse. There are sonnets on natural objects, on personal griefs and friendships, on religious or reflective subjects more generally, and, above all, on literature. He wrote sonnets on Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, and, supremely, on Dante. His brief sequence of six sonnets to the great Tuscan whose works he translated remain unsurpassed in our literature for unity of conception and execution.

Because of its unique place in American sonnet history, this sequence has been reprinted in entirety.

MEZZO CAMMIN

Half of my life is gone, and I have let
The years slip from me and have not fulfilled
The aspiration of my youth, to build
Some tower of song with lofty parapet.
Not indolence, nor pleasure, nor the fret
Of restless passions that would not be stilled,
But sorrow, and a care that almost killed,
Kept me from what I may accomplish yet:
Though, half-way up the hill, I see the Past
Lying beneath me with its sounds and sights,—
A city in the twilight dim and vast,
With smoking roofs, soft bells, and gleaming lights,—
And hear above me on the autumnal blast
The cataract of Death far thundering from the heights.

DANTE

Tuscan, that wanderest through the realms of gloom,
With thoughtful pace, and sad, majestic eyes,
Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul arise,
Like Farinata from his fiery tomb.
Thy sacred song is like the trump of doom;
Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,

What soft compassion glows, as in the skies
The tender stars their clouded lamps relume!
Methinks I see thee stand with pallid cheeks
By Fra Hilario in his diocese,
As up the convent-walls, in golden streaks,
The ascending sunbeams mark the day's decrease;
And, as he asks what there the stranger seeks,
Thy voice along the cloister whispers "Peace!"

DIVINA COMMEDIA—I

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet,
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er:
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

II

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediaeval miracle of song!

III

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below;
And then a voice celestial that begins
With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

IV

With snow-white veil and garments as of flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the woe
From which thy song and all its splendors came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest cast,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase;
Lethe and Eunoë—the remembered dream
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

V

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.

And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host.

VI

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy flame is blown abroad from all the heights,
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear thy wondrous word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

NATURE

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little one to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.[1]

[1] "Poetical Works," Riverside Edition, pp. 84, 85, 374-376, and 412 respectively.

John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892] wrote twenty-three sonnets between 1841 and 1889. They are all other than English or Italian in form, sixteen of them having the scheme *abba cddc effe gg.*

Stedman said of Whittier's sonnets:

> They are little more than fourteen line homilies. Those who know their author find something of him in them, but such efforts do not reveal him to a new acquaintance. . . . He was essentially a balladist, a writer of unsophisticated verse.[1]

REQUIREMENT

We live by faith; but faith is not the slave
Of text and legend. Reason's voice and God's,
Nature's and Duty's, never are at odds.
What asks our Father of His children, save
Justice and mercy and humility,
A reasonable service of good deeds,
Pure living, tenderness to human needs,
Reverence and trust, and prayer for light to see
The Master's footprints in our daily ways?
No knotted scourge nor sacrificial knife,
But the calm beauty of an ordered life
Whose very breathing is unworded praise!—
A life that stands as all true lives have stood,
Firm-rooted in the faith that God is good.

O. W. HOLMES ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

Climbing a path which leads back never more
We heard behind his footsteps and his cheer;
Now, face to face, we greet him standing here
Upon the lonely summit of fourscore!
Welcome to us, o'er whom the lengthened day
Is closing and the shadows colder grow,
His genial presence, like an afterglow,
Following the one just vanishing away.
Long be it ere the table shall be set
For the last breakfast of the Autocrat,
And love repeat with smiles and tears thereat

[1] "Encyclopedia Brittanica," Vol. XXVIII, p. 614a.

His own sweet songs that time shall not forget.
Waiting with us the call to come up higher,
Life is not less, the heavens are only nigher.[1]

All anthologies of American poetry contain sonnets by Park Benjamin [1809-1864]. Twenty-one were read for this study.

A GREAT NAME

Time! thou destroyest the relics of the past,
And hidest all the footprints of thy march
On shattered column and on crumbled arch,
By moss and ivy growing green and fast.
Hurled into fragments by the tempest-blast
The Rhodian monster lies; the obelisk
That with sharp line divided the broad disk
Of Egypt's sun, down to the sands was cast:
And where these stood, no remnant-trophy stands,
And even the art is dead by which they rose:
Thus, with the monuments of other lands,
The place that knew them now no longer knows.
Yet triumph not, O, Time; strong towers decay,
But a great name shall never pass away.[2]

Oliver Wendell Holmes [1809-1894] has eleven sonnets in the Riverside Edition of his poems, nine of them regularly Italian in form.

RHYMES OF A LIFE TIME

From the first gleam of morning to the gray
Of peaceful evening, lo, a life unrolled!
In woven pictures all its changes told,
Its lights, its shadows, every flitting ray,
Till the long curtain, falling, dims the day,
Steals from the dial's disk the sunlight's gold,
And all the graven hours grow dark and cold
Where late the glowing blaze of noontide lay.

[1] "Poetical Works," Riverside Edition, pp. 461 and 473.
[2] "The United States Magazine and Democratic Review," Aug. 1839 (VI, No. 20, p. 127).

Ah! the warm blood runs wild in youthful veins,—
Let me no longer play with painted fire;
New songs for new-born days! I would not tire
The listening ears that wait for fresher strains,
In phrase new-moulded, new-forged rhythmic chains,
With plaintive measures of a worn-out lyre.

TO J. G. WHITTIER ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

Friend, whom thy fourscore winters leave more dear
Than when life's roseate summer on thy cheek
Burned in the flush of manhood's manliest year,
Lonely, how lonely! is the snowy peak
Thy feet have reached, and mine have climbed so near!
Close on thy footsteps mid the landscape drear
I stretch my hand thine answering grasp to seek,
Warm with the love no rippling rhymes can speak!
Look backwards! From thy lofty height survey
Thy years of toil, of peaceful victories won,
Of dreams made real, largest hopes outrun!
Look forward! Brighter than earth's morning ray
Streams the pure light of Heaven's unsetting sun,
The all unclouded dawn of life's immortal day![1]

Edgar Allan Poe [1809-1849] wrote five regular sonnets in the English form. It is doubtful if the sonnet was a favorite form with Poe, chafing as he did at all stanzaic rigidity. His theory of the stanza was his theory of the line—the meaning should decide the form. *To My Mother* is certainly the best of his sonnets, and one of his finest poems. This tribute to Mrs. Clemm is doubly interesting because, together with *For Annie*, written in the same last year of his life, it constitutes what is perhaps Poe's most sincere personal utterance, and because the sestet contains the only reference to his real mother to be found in all his works.

TO MY MOTHER

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,

[1] "Poetical Works," Riverside Edition, pp. 268 and 275.

None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

SONNET-SILENCE

There are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God![1]

Margaret Fuller [1810-1850], the high-priestess of Transcendentalism, was the author of eight sonnets. Six of them form stanzas of her poem, *A Journey to Trenton Falls.*

Elizabeth C. Kinney [1810-1889] wrote fifty-five sonnets, most of them hopelessly irregular.

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1917, pp. 133 and 105.

Theodore Parker [1810-1860] wrote at least nine sonnets.

THE PILGRIM'S STAR

To me thou cam'st, the earliest lamp of light,
When youthful day must sadly disappear,—
A star prophetic in a world of night,
Revealing what a heaven of love was near:
And full of rapture at thy joyous sight,
I journeyed fearless on the starlight way,—
A thousand other lights came forth on height,
But queenliest of all still shone thy ray.
O blessed lamp of Beauty and of Love,
How long I've felt thy shining far away!
Now, when the morn has chased the shadows gray,
Still guided by thy memory forth I rove,
I'll journey on till dark still lighter prove,
And Star and Pilgrim meet where all is Day.[1]

Christopher Pearse Cranch [1813-1892] wrote twenty-eight sonnets, most of which appear in *The Bird and The Bell,* Boston, 1875. *The Death Blow,* written at the time of the assassination of President Lincoln, is a good example, in American literature, of the "occasional" sonnet.

THE DEATH BLOW

But yesterday the exulting nation's shout
Swelled on the breeze of victory through the streets;
But yesterday on gay flags flaunted out
Like flowers the south-wind woos from their retreats,—
Flowers of the Union, blue and white and red,
Blooming on balcony and spire and mast,
Telling us that war's wintry storm had fled,
And spring was more than spring to us at last.
To-day,—the nation's heart lies crushed and weak;
Drooping and draped in black our banners stand.
Too stunned to cry revenge, we scarce may speak
The grief that chokes all utterance through the land.
God is in all. With tears our eyes are dim,
Yet strive through darkness to look up to Him.[2]

[1] "Autobiography, Poems and Prayers," Boston, n. d., p. 418.
[2] "The Bird and the Bell," Boston, 1875, p. 325.

The twenty-nine sonnets of Henry Theodore Tuckerman [1813-1871] are all Shakespearean in form, uniformly well-constructed, and on a wide variety of themes.

TO ONE DECEIVED

All hearts are not disloyal; let thy trust
Be deep and clear and all-confiding still;
For though Love's fruit turn on the lips to dust,
She ne'er betrays her child to lasting ill:
Through leagues of desert must the pilgrim go
Ere on his gaze the holy turrets rise;
Through the long sultry day the stream must flow,
Ere it can mirror twilight's purple skies.
Fall back unscathed from contact with the vain,
Keep thy robes white, thy spirit bold and free,
And calmly launch affection's bark again,
Hopeful of golden spoils reserved for thee.
Though lone the way as that already trod,
Cling to thine own integrity and God.[1]

In his own day, and in the retrospect of literary history, Jones Very [1813-1880] is *the* poet of Transcendentalism.

His *Poems,* published in Boston in 1883, contain one hundred and seven sonnets, every one in the Shakespearean form, and every one replete with that "vague mysticism" which Lee rightly noted as his greatest fault.

THE IDLER

I idle stand that I may find employ,
Such as my Master when he comes will give;
I cannot find in mine own work my joy,
But wait, although in waiting I must live;
My body shall not turn which way it will,
But stand till I the appointed road can find,
And journeying so his messages fulfill,
And do at every step the work designed.

[1] "Poems," Boston, 1851, p. 160.

Enough for me, still day by day to wait
Till Thou who form'st me find'st me too a task;
A cripple lying at the rich man's gate,
Content for the few crumbs I get to ask;
A laborer but in heart, while bound my hands
Hang idly down still waiting thy commands.[1]

Sarah Helen (Powers) Whitman [1813-1878] wrote thirteen sonnets, six of them to Edgar Allan Poe.

TO EDGAR ALLAN POE

When first I looked into thy glorious eyes,
And saw, with their unearthly beauty pained,
Heaven deepening within heaven, like the skies
Of autumn nights without a shadow stained,
I stood as one whom some strange dream enthralls;
For, far away, in some lost life divine,
Some land which every glorious dream recalls,
A spirit looked on me with eyes like thine.
E'en now, though death has veiled their starry light,
And closed their lids in his relentless night—
As some strange dream, remembered in a dream,
Again I see in sleep their tender beam;
Unfading hopes their cloudless azure fill,
Heaven deepening within heaven, serene and still.[2]

Charlotte Cushman [1816-1876], the great actress, wrote at least two sonnets.

John Godfrey Saxe [1816-1887] wrote twenty-three sonnets, two of which, *Why?* and *Remembrance,* were thought good enough to be reprinted in *Latter Day Lyrics,* W. Davenport Adams, London, 1878.

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[1] "Poems," Boston, 1883, p. 41.
[2] "Poems," Boston, 1879, p. 91.

WHY?

"Why do I love thee?" Thus, in earnest wise,
I answer: Sweet! I love thee for thy face
Of rarest beauty; and for every grace
That in thy voice and air and motion lies;
I love thee for the love-look in thine eyes,—
The melting glance which only one may see
Of all who mark how beautiful they be;
I love thee for thy mind (which yet denies,
For modesty, how wonderful it is!)
I love thee for thy heart so true and warm;
I love thee for thy bosom's hidden charm;
I love thee for thy mouth so sweet to kiss;
Because of these I love thee; yet above
All else, because I cannot choose but love![1]

William Ellery Channing, 2nd, [1818-1901] wrote eleven sonnets, nine of them regularly Italian in structure. The one reprinted is entirely representative, both of theme and treatment.

SONNETS OF LOVE AND ASPIRATION—I

Thou art like that which is most sweet and fair,
A gentle morning in the youth of Spring,
When the few early birds begin to sing
Within the delicate depths of the fine air;
Yet shouldst thou these dear beauties much impair,
Since thou art better than is everything
Which either woods or skies or green fields bring;
And finer thoughts hast thou than they can wear.
In the proud sweetness of thy grace I see
What lies within—a pure and steadfast mind,
Which its own mistress is of sanctity,
And to all gentleness hath been refined;
So that thy least breath falleth upon me
As the soft breathing of midsummer wind.[2]

[1] "Poetical Works," Riverside Edition, p. 104.
[2] "Poems of Sixty Five Years," Phila. and Concord, 1902, p. 49.

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891] wrote fifty-seven sonnets in all, according to the Riverside edition of his poems, thirty-six Italian, six Shakespearean, and fifteen in various other schemes. Of his Italian sonnets, no less than twenty-five have the sestet *cdcdcd,* the second most widely used form in our literature.

Lowell's sonnets cover a wide diversity of subject, but those concerned with literary themes predominate. They were written in early manhood, and in an accompanying poem he calls them

> The firstlings of my muse,
> Poor windfalls of unripe experience,
> Young buds plucked hastily by childish hands.

The best of his sonnets are the six entitled *On Reading Wordsworth's Sonnets in Defense of Capital Punishment.* The third of these sonnets is reprinted here.

SONNET III

The love of all things springs from love of one;
Wider the soul's horizon hourly grows,
And over it with fuller glory flows
The sky-like spirit of God; a hope begun
In doubt and darkness 'neath a fairer sun
Cometh to fruitage, if it be of Truth;
And to the law of meekness, faith, and ruth,
By inward sympathy, shall all be won:
This thou shouldst know, who from the painted feature
Of shifting Fashion, couldst thy brethren turn
Unto the love of ever-youthful Nature,
And of a beauty fadeless and eterne;
And always 'tis the saddest sight to see
An old man faithless in Humanity.

SONNET

I cannot think that thou shouldst pass away,
Whose life to mine is an eternal law,
A piece of nature that can have no flaw,
A new and certain sunrise every day;
But, if thou art to be another ray
About the Sun of Life, and art to live

Free from what part of thee was fugitive,
The debt of Love I will more fully pay,
Not downcast with the thought of thee so high,
But rather raised to be a nobler man,
And more divine in my humanity,
As knowing that the waiting eyes which scan
My life are lighted by a purer being,
And ask high, calm-browed deeds, with it agreeing.[1]

Thomas William Parsons [1819-1892] wrote ten sonnets.

SONNET

Not now for sleep, O slumber-god! we sue;
Hypnus! not sleep, but give our souls repose!
Of the day's music such a mellowing close
As might have rested Shakespeare from his art,
Or soothed the spirit of the Tuscan strong
Who best read life, its passions and its woes,
And wrought of sorrow earth's divinest song.
Bring us a mood that might have lulled Mozart;
Not stupor, not forgetfulness, not dreams,
But vivid sense of what is best and rarest,
And sweet remembrance of the blessed few;
In the real presence of this fair world's fairest:
A spell of peace—as't were by those dear streams
Bocaccio wrote of, when romance was new.[2]

Anne C. Lynch [1820-1891] wrote fifteen sonnets, "grave but not sombre, with the spirit of a pure gentle philosophy breathing through them." [3]

SONNET

(On Seeing the Ivory Statue of Christ)

The enthusiast brooding in his cell apart
O'er the sad image of the Crucified,
The drooping head, closed lips, and piercèd side,
A holy vision fills his raptured heart;

[1] "Collected Poems," Riverside Edition, pp. 23 and 21.
[2] "The Willey House and Sonnets," Cambridge, 1875, p. 28.
[3] Lee, in Hunt's "Book of the Sonnet," Vol. I, p. 129.

With heavenly power inspired, his unskill'd arm
Shapes the rude block to this transcendent form.
Oh! Son of God! thus, ever thus, would I
Dwell on the loveliness enshrined in Thee;
The lofty faith, the sweet humility,
The boundless love, the love that could not die.
And as the sculptor, with Thy glory warm,
Gives to this chisell'd ivory Thy fair form,
So would my spirit in Thy thought divine
Grow to a semblance, fair as this, of Thine.[1]

Margaret Junkin Preston [1820-1897] published in Baltimore in 1866 a small volume—*Beechenbrook, a Rhyme of the War.* It contains two sonnets typical of, but better than, many others written by Southern people during and after the war. *Virginia,* probably the better of the two, is reprinted here. Eight other sonnets are found in the anthologies.

VIRGINIA

Grandly thou fillest the world's eye today,
My proud Virginia! When the gage was thrown—
The deadly gage of battle—thou, alone,
Strong in thy self-control, didst stoop to lay
The olive-branch thereon, and calmly pray
We might have peace, the rather. When the foe
Turned scornfully upon thee,—bade thee go,
And whistled up his war hounds, then—the way
Of duty full before thee—thou didst spring
Into the center of the martial ring—
Thy brave blood boiling, and thy glorious eye,
Shot with heroic fire, and swear to claim
Sublimest victory in God's own name,
Or, wrapped in robe of martyrdom, to die![2]

Maria White Lowell [1821-1853] wrote four sonnets, evidently to her husband, James Russell Lowell. They are worthy poems, full of a sincere passion.

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1849, p. 24.
[2] "Beechenbrook," Baltimore, 1866, p. 76.

IN ABSENCE

These rugged, wintry days I scarce could bear,
Did I not know that in the early spring,
When wild March winds upon their errands sing,
Thou wouldst return, bursting on this still air,
Like those same winds, when, startled from their lair,
They hunt up violets and free swift brooks
From icy cares, even as thy clear looks
Bid my heart bloom and sing and break all care:
When drops with welcome rain the April day,
My flowers shall find then April in thine eyes;
Save there the rain in dreamy clouds doth stay,
As loath to fall out of those happy skies;
And sure, my love, thou art most like to May,
That comes, with steady sun, when April dies.[1]

Frederick Goddard Tuckerman [1821-1877] wrote seventy irregular sonnets, many of them of real feeling.

SONNETS XXVI AND XXVII

For Nature daily through her grand design
Breathes contradiction where she seems most clear.
For I have held of her the gift to hear;
And felt, indeed, endowed of sense divine,
When I have found, by guarded insight fine,
Cold April flowers in the green end of June;
And thought myself possessed of Nature's ear,
When, by the lonely mill-brook, into mine,
Seated on slab, or trunk asunder drawn,
The night-hawk blew his horn at sunny noon;
And in the rainy midnight I have heard
The ground-sparrow's long twitter from the pine,
And the cat-bird's silver song—the wakeful bird
That to the lighted window sings for dawn.

So, to the mind long brooding but on it—
A haunting theme for anger, joy, or tears,—
With ardent eyes, not what we think, appears,

[1] "Poems," Cambridge, 1907, p. 41.

But, hunted home, behold its opposite!
Worn Sorrow breaking in disastrous mirth,
And wild tears wept of laughter, like the drops
Shook by the trampling thunder to the earth;
And each seems either, or but a counterfeit
Of that it would dissemble: hopes are fears,
And love is woe. Nor here the discord stops;
But through all human life runs the account,—
Born into pain, and ending bitterly;
Yet sweet perchance, between-time, like a fount,
That rises salt, and freshes to the sea.[1]

Thomas Buchanan Read [1822-1872] wrote five sonnets. *To the Master Bards,* reprinted here, is probably the best.

TO THE MASTER BARDS

Ye mighty masters of the song sublime,
Who, phantom-like, with large unwavering eyes,
Stalk down the solemn wilderness of Time,
Reading the mysteries of the future skies;
O, scorn not earth because it is not heaven;
Nor shake the dust against us from your feet,
Because we have rejected what was given!
Still let your tongues the wondrous theme repeat!
Though ye be friendless in this solitude,
Quick-wingèd thoughts, from many an unborn year,
God-sent, shall feed ye with prophetic food,
Like those blest birds which fed the ancient Seer!
And Inspiration, like a wheelèd flame,
Shall bear ye upward to eternal fame.[2]

Richard Grant White [1822-1885] belongs to this history because of one famous sonnet, written when he was twenty-one, —"the celebrated Washington sonnet, which . . . got into print anonymously, and was frequently quoted as Wordsworth's."[3] Bryant ascribed it to Walter Savage Landor.

[1] "Poems," 1864, pp. 196-197.
[2] "Poetical Works," Philadelphia, 1890, Vol. I, 173.
[3] Duyckinck, Vol. II, p. 870.

WASHINGTON—PATER PATRIAE

High over all whom might or mind made great,
Yielding the conqueror's crown to harder hearts,
Exalted not by politician's arts,
Yet with a will to meet and master Fate,
And skill to rule a young divided state,
Greater by what was not than what was done,
Alone on History's height stands Washington;
And teeming Time shall not bring forth his mate.
For only he, of Men, on Earth was sent
In all the might of mind's integrity:
Ne'er as in him truth, strength, and wisdom blent:
And that his glory might eternal be,
A boundless country is his monument,
A mighty nation his posterity.[1]

In a letter to Bayard Taylor, George Henry Boker [1823-1890] wrote facetiously that he had written more sonnets "than any poet in the language except Wordsworth." Certain it is that, with the single exception of Lloyd Mifflin, he has written more sonnets than any other American sonneteer.

Of Boker's three hundred and eighty-nine sonnets, of which all but eighteen are Italian in form, three hundred and thirteen form one magnificent *Sequence on Profane Love,* a sequence but recently discovered, and still more recently published. The sequence, to quote the editor's words, is, in its major part,

> perhaps the most remarkable exposition of its sort in English poetry in both the scope of the experience recorded and the duration of the relationship. No mood has been avoided; from the platonic ideality to the fervor of physical consummation, from abject despair to the ecstacy of complete possession, the lover's experiences and emotions are clearly portrayed.

TO ENGLAND

I

Lear and Cordelia! 't was an ancient tale
Before thy Shakespeare gave it deathless fame:

[1] "The New York Evening Post," Jan. 3, 1855, p. 2, col. 3.

The times have changed, the moral is the same.
So like an outcast, dowerless, and pale,
Thy daughter went; and in a foreign gale
Spread her young banner, till its sway became
A wonder to the nations. Days of shame
Are close upon thee: prophets raise their wail.
When the rude Cossack with an outstretched hand
Points his long spear across the narrow sea,—
"Lo, there is England!" when thy destiny
Storms on thy straw-crowned head, and thou dost stand
Weak, helpless, mad, a by-word in the land,—
God grant thy daughter a Cordelia be!

II

Stand, thou great bulwark of man's liberty!
Thou rock of shelter, rising from the wave,
Sole refuge to the overwearied brave
Who planned, arose, and battled to be free,
Fell undeterred, then sadly turned to thee;—
Saved the free spirit from their country's grave,
To rise again, and animate the slave,
When God shall ripen all things. Britons, ye
Who guard the sacred outpost, not in vain
Hold your proud peril! Freemen undefiled,
Keep watch and ward! Let battlements be piled
Around your cliffs; fleets marshalled, till the main
Sinks under them; and if your courage wane,
Through force or fraud, look westward to your child.[1]

From A SEQUENCE ON PROFANE LOVE

XV

Where is my merit? By what special grace
Am I so blessed above all other men?
I have some fancy, and the art to pen
A halting sonnet to thy perfect face.
But what of that? The thrush or twittering wren
Makes sweeter music from his resting-place.
No outward beauty in my life I trace.

[1] "Plays and Poems," Boston, 1856, Vol. II, pp. 377-378.

No thought or deed heroical; and when
My eyes turn inward, I am stricken blind
At the abyss of weakness, folly, sin,
That like a miner's shaft, sinks far within
My darkened nature. Nowhere can I find
Cause for thy love. Rest, rest, my troubled mind!
Where reason stops, let soaring faith begin.

LV

I strive to live my life in whitest truth,
Even in the face of this deceitful world;
And if in errors I am caught and whirled
From the fair courses of my candid youth,
I view my trespasses with thoughtful ruth;
And the poor mummer's scornful lip is curled,
And a low curse indignantly is hurled
At arts which others blindly take as sooth.
But when I enter thy pure presence, Sweet,
I come as one into a holy shrine.
I taste the mystic wafer and the wine,
And fraud and falsehood from my heart retreat.
Through thy divinity I grow divine,
And my world's mask lies empty at thy feet.

CLXXV

Nothing is stable. Though the deeds we do
May bind the nations in a servile chain,
And give to cowering slaves their joy and pain,
The far result still frowns in open view.
A little wound will let great Caesar through,
An asp make Egypt's dusky charmer plain;
And all the power and beauty that remain
Go shivering naked up the mystic blue.
Earth smiles at tyrants, when the crown is laid
Upon the coffin, and their history
To after times with laughter is displayed.
Death and oblivion are the proudest fee
Of men's endeavor; and the delver's spade
Rounds all our hillocks fair and evenly.

CCLI

When with the courage lent me by thy smile,
I laid my hands upon thy sacred form,
Dared, passion-wild, thy scented mouth to warm
With cleaving kisses, unrepelled the while;
Was it thy patience or my venturous guile
Shook virtue's outworks with a fiery storm,
And made her guards the trembling ramparts swarm,
To meet a foe who came in friendly style?
I know not, Love; but since that trustful day
I grow more careful of myself, less stained
By wordly touch, as though that touch profaned.
I am all thine, more like thee; if thou'lt say
Those kisses brushed thy purest bloom away,
Say also this, that what thou lost, I gained.

CCCVIII

Love sat at ease upon Time's bony knee;
Pulled his grey beard; paddled his finger-tips
Among his wrinkles; smote his bloodless lips;
With rosy palms, forbade his eyes to see;
O'erturned his fatal hour-glass; wantonly
Pulled his scythe-edge against that dart which rips
The heart of adamant; cast gibes and quips
Straight in his teeth, out-mocking mockery.
What said this phantom? Nought; he only smiled
To be thus toyed with; held his wasting breath,
Lest he might do some damage to the child;
Till Love, grown weary of that pastime, saith,
"This is too tame; my heart with joy is wild;
Come, Father, come! Let us go play with Death!" [1]

Thomas Wentworth Higginson [1823-1911] was a writer as well as a collector of sonnets. His twenty-one sonnets are Italian in form, and on various themes.

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[1] "Sonnets: A Sequence on Profane Love," Philadelphia, 1929.

These five sonnets are reprinted by permission of The University of Pennsylvania Press, and by the courtesy of Dr. Edward Sculley Bradley, editor of the sonnets.

THE SNOWING OF THE PINES

Softer than silence, stiller than still air,
Float down from high pine-boughs the tender leaves.
The forest floor its annual boon receives,
That comes like snowfall, tireless, tranquil, fair.
Gently they glide, gently they clothe the bare
Old rocks with grace. Their fall a mantle weaves
Of paper yellower than autumnal sheaves,
Or those strange blossoms the witch-hazels wear.
Athwart long aisles the sunbeams pierce their way;
High up, the crows are gathering for the night:
The delicate needles fill the air; the jay
Takes through their radiant mist his radiant flight;
They fall and fall, till at November's close,
The snowflakes drop as lightly—snows on snows.[1]

James Bayard Taylor [1825-1878] wrote eleven sonnets, six Italian, and five irregular. In general they are sonnets growing out of his travels, or sonnets ascribed to friends.

NUBIA

A land of Dreams and Sleep,—a poppied land!
With skies of endless calm above her head,
The drowsy warmth of summer noonday shed
Upon her hills, and silence stern and grand
Throughout her Desert's temple-burying sand.
Before her threshold, in their ancient place,
With closèd lips, and fixed, majestic face,
Noteless of time, her dumb colossi stand.
O, pass them not with light irreverent tread;
Respect the dream that builds her fallen throne,
And soothes her to oblivion of her woes.
Hush! for she does but sleep; she is not dead:
Action and Toil have made the world their own,
But she hath built an altar to Repose.[2]

[1] "The Afternoon Landscape," N. Y., 1889, p. 26.
Reprinted by special permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.
[2] "Poems of the Orient," Boston, 1855, p. 122.

Richard Henry Stoddard [1825-1903] has eleven sonnets in his *Poems,* 1880. These eleven sonnets are also found scattered through the various anthologies.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

This man whose homely face you look upon,
Was one of Nature's masterful great men;
Born with strong arms, that unfought battles won;
Direct of speech, and cunning with the pen.
Chosen for large designs, he had the art
Of winning with his humor, and he went
Straight to his mark, which was the human heart;
Wise, too, for what he could not break he bent.
Upon his back a more than Atlas-load,
The burden of the Commonwealth, was laid;
He stooped, and rose up to it, though the road
Shot suddenly downwards, not a whit dismayed.
Hold, warriors, councilors, kings! All now give place
To this dear benefactor of the Race.[1]

The Portfolio, published in Philadelphia from 1801 to 1825 by Joseph Dennie (Oliver Oldschool), contains twenty-nine sonnets among its *Original Poetry.* They appear under various single names and initials; eight of the twenty-nine being signed *Harley.*

William Gibson [1826-1887] wrote fourteen sonnets in all.

Lucy Larcom [1826-1893] wrote eleven sonnets, one of which is reprinted here.

THEY SAID

They said of her, "She never can have felt
The sorrows that our deeper natures feel:"
They said, "Her placid lips have never spelt
Hard lessons taught by Pain; her eyes reveal

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1880, p. 434.

No passionate yearning, no perplexed appeal
To other eyes. Life and her heart have dwelt
With her but lightly."—When the Pilgrims dwelt
First on these shores, lest savage hands should steal
To precious graves with desecrating tread,
The burial-field was with the ploughshare crossed,
And there the maize her silken tresses tossed.
With thanks those Pilgrims ate their bitter bread,
While peaceful harvests hid what they had lost.
—What if her smiles concealed from you her dead?[1]

Silas Weir Mitchell [1829-1914] wrote eight sonnets, only two of them regular. Most of them are descriptive in nature.

LINCOLN

Chained by stern duty to the rock of State,
His Spirit armed in mail of rugged mirth,
Ever above, though ever near to earth,
Yet felt his heart the cruel tongues that sate
Base appetites, and foul with slander, wait
Till the keen lightnings bring the awful hour
When wounds and suffering shall give them power.
Most was he like to Luther, gay and great,
Solemn and mirthful, strong of heart and limb.
Tender and simple too; he was so near
To all things human, that he cast out fear,
And, ever simple, like a little child,
Lived in unconscious nearness unto Him
Who always on earth's little ones hath smiled.[2]

Henry Timrod [1829-1867] wrote fifteen sonnets, fourteen of them irregular, of a reflective nature. The one reprinted here is characterized by the evident sincerity of sentiment common to them all.

[1] "Poems," New York, 1884, p. 226.
[2] "Poems," N. Y., 1914, p. 279.
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SONNET

Most men know love but as a part of life;
They hide it in some corner of the breast,
Even from themselves; and only when they rest
In the brief pauses of that daily strife,
Wherewith the world might else be not so rife,
They draw it forth (as one draws forth a toy
To soothe some ardent, kiss-exacting boy)
And hold it up to sister, child, or wife.
Ah me! why may not love and life be one?
Why walk we thus alone, when by our side,
Love, like a visible God, might be our guide?
How would the marts grow noble! and the street,
Worn like a dungeon-floor by weary feet,
Seem then a golden court-way of the Sun![1]

Henry Sylvester Cornwell [1831-1886] has fifteen irregular sonnets in his volume of poems, *The Land of Dreams.* Two others are found in anthologies.

The poems of Paul Hamilton Hayne [1831-1886] contain ninety-eight sonnets, a majority of them Italian in form. Most of them are of natural objects, with a gentle religious note breathing through them. In another group he voices the loyalty of Southern men to the cause they thought just. Lee wrote of Hayne as a sonneteer:

. . . simple, passionate, and direct, . . . he has studied faithfully the structure and capabilities of the sonnet . . . . His political sonnets are filled with patriotic fire and martial vigor.[2]

ELLIOTT IN FORT SUMTER

And high amongst these chiefs of iron grain,
Large-statured natures, souls of Spartan mien,
Superbly brave, inflexibly serene,
Man of the stalwart hope, the sleepless brain,
Well dost thou guard our fortress by the main!

[1] "Poems," Richmond, Va., 1901, p. 170.
[2] "Book of the Sonnet," Vol. I, p. 125.

And what, though inch by inch old Sumter falls;
There's not a stone that forms those sacred walls,
But holds a tongue, which shall not speak in vain!
A tongue that tells of such heroic mood,
Such nerved endurance, such immaculate will,
That after times shall harken and grow still,
With breathless admiration, and on thee
(Whose stern resolve our glorious cause made good)
Confer an antique immortality.

FRESHNESS OF POETIC INSPIRATION

Day follows day; years perish; still mine eyes
Are opened on the self-same round of space;
Yon fadeless forests in their Titan grace,
And the dark splendors of those opulent skies.
I watch, unwearied, the miraculous dyes
Of dawn or sunset; the soft boughs which lace
Round some coy dryad in a lovely place,
Thrilled with low whispering and strange sylvan sighs:
Weary? The poet's mind is fresh as dew,
And oft refilled as fountains of the light.
His clear child's soul finds something sweet and new
Even in a weed's heart, the carvéd leaves of corn,
The spear-like grass, the silvery rim of morn,
A cloud rose-edged, and fleeting stars at night.[1]

Helen Hunt Jackson [1831-1885] wrote eighty-five sonnets, all Italian in form, and all breathing a tender piety. *Sealed Orders,* reprinted here, was greatly praised by Emerson.

SEALED ORDERS

When ship with "orders sealed" sails out to sea,
Men eager crowd the wharves, and reverent gaze
Upon their faces whose brave spirits raise
No question if the unknown voyage be
Of deadly peril. Benedictions free
And prayers and tears are given, and the days
Counted till other ships, on homeward ways,

[1] "Poems," Boston, 1882, pp. 85 and 257.

May bring back message of her destiny.
Yet, all the time, Life's tossing sea is white
With scudding sails which no man reefs or stays
By his own will, for roughest day or night:
Brave, helpless crews, with captain out of sight,
Harbor unknown, voyage of long delays,
They meet no other ships on homeward ways.[1]

John Albee [1833-1915] wrote six sonnets.

Julia Stockton Dinsmore [1833-1926] wrote sixty-eight sonnets, among them one elegiac sequence of twenty-three sonnets of great beauty. Of her sixty-eight sonnets, all but two are Italian in form.

THE SONNET

Like a cut jewel in its form exact,
Molded by happy art, which knows no wrong,
And though so fragile-seeming, strangely strong,
The cell within the honeycomb compact
Can hold the subtile essences intact
Of once loved lilies, faded now so long,
And clover blossoms a bewildering throng,
And to its measure summer's sweets contract.
So in the sonnet-cell the poets build,
Little but fashioned for containing much,
They oftentimes their choicest nectar store,
With memory's delicate aroma filled,
And in the cup no careless hand may touch
The hoarded sweetness of a lifetime pour.

A SECOND THOUGHT

It is so long since thou wert lost to view,
Through the dim shadow-valley gone before,
That with grief's wonted pangs there throbs one more,
The dread that my lone heart, however true—
As years take all—may lose thy likeness, too,
The ungraven image it can still adore.

[1] "Poems," Boston, 1910, p. 196.
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Vain dread! for calming time will but restore
Those visioned love-limned lineaments anew,—
As in a lake the mirrored moon may show
Inconstant, dimmed by every blurring breeze,
But pure and rounded when the ripples cease,—
In my soul's deep shall thy reflection grow.
From wavering glimpses perfect by degrees,
As sorrow's surge subsides to waveless peace.[1]

Edmund Clarence Stedman [1833-1908] has eight sonnets in his *Collected Poems.*

AD VIGELEM—WHITTIER'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

What seest thou, where the peaks about thee stand,
Far up the ridge that severs from our view
That realm unvisited? What prospect new
Holds thy rapt eye? What glories of the land,
Which from loftier cliff thou now hast scanned,
Upon thy visage set their lustrous hue?
Speak and interpret still, O watchman true,
The signals answering thy lifted hand!
And bide thee yet! still linger, ere thy feet
To sainted bards that beckon bear thee down—
Though lilies, asphodel and spikenard sweet
Await thy tread to blossom; and the crown
Long since is woven of Heaven's palm-leaves, meet
For him whom Earth can lend no more renown.[2]

Phillips Brooks [1835-1893] wrote thirteen irregular sonnets on literary and religious themes.

The sonnets of Louise Chandler Moulton [1835-1908] were more valued half a century ago than they are today. They are, nevertheless, among the best in our literature. Every one of her one hundred and twenty-two sonnets is Italian in form and of

[1] "Verses and Sonnets," New York, 1910, pp. 143 and 117.
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[2] "Poems," New York, 1908, p. 192.
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superior technique. In her use of the sestet, she follows the general trend of the American sonnet, her first and second preferences being *cdecde* and *cdcdcd* respectively.

In theme her sonnets cover a wide range, but are chiefly amatory, reflective, and literary. There are few finer religious sonnets in our literature than *Help Thou Mine Unbelief.*

HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF

Because I seek Thee not, oh seek Thou me!
Because my lips are dumb, oh hear the cry
I do not utter as Thou passest by,
And from my life-long bondage set me free!
Because content I perish, far from Thee,
Oh seize me, snatch me from my fate, and try
My soul in Thy consuming fire! Draw nigh
And let me, blinded, Thy salvation see.
If I were pouring at Thy feet my tears,
If I were clamoring to see Thy face,
I should not need Thee, Lord, as now I need,
Whose dumb, dead soul knows neither hopes nor fears,
Nor dreads the outer darkness of this place—
Because I seek not, pray not, give Thou heed.

SONNET

Were but my spirit loosed upon the air—
By some high power who could Life's chains unbind,
Set free to seek what most it longs to find—
To no proud Court of Kings would I repair.
I would but climb, once more, a narrow stair,
When day was wearing late, and dusk was kind;
And one should greet me to my failings blind,
Content so I but shared his twilight there.
Nay! well I know he waits not as of old—
I could not find him in the old-time place—
I must pursue him, made by sorrow bold,
Through worlds unknown, in strange celestial race,
Whose mystic round no traveler has told,
From star to star, until I see his face.[1]

[1] "Poems and Sonnets," Boston, 1909, pp. 232 and 364.
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John James Piatt [1835-1917] wrote eleven reflective sonnets, the best one of which is reprinted here.

CHANGE

One after one we see our friends depart,
As stars of midnight melt into the morn;
From sweeter dreams awakes the weary heart,
To throb, like Ruth's, "amid the alien corn,"
When sick for home, she sighed, so dreary and forlorn.
Yet not of thee I grieve, Oh! mighty Death—
Thy ways are pleasant ways, thy paths are peace.
As flowers will fall in Autumn's quiet breath
At thy still coming, all our troubles cease—
But of the death called Change—the living death,
That mocks us with a semblance falsely shown,
The ghost of what it was without the breath
That animates the soul, the altered tone
And cold, averted look that leaves us so alone.[1]

Thomas Bailey Aldrich [1836-1907] wrote thirty-one sonnets, only twenty-eight of which are found in the Riverside edition of his poems. Most of them are Italian in form, and descriptive or occasional in theme.

ELLEN TERRY IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

As there she lives and moves upon the scene,
So lived and moved this radiant womanhood
In Shakespeare's vision; in such wise she stood
Smiling upon Bassanio; such her mien
When pity dimmed her eyelid's golden sheen,
Hearing Antonio's story, and the blood
Paled in her cheek, and all the lightsome mood
Was gone. This shape in Shakespeare's thought has been!
Thus dreamt he of her in gray London town;
Such were her eyes; on such gold-colored hair
The grave young judge's velvet cap was set;
So stood she lovely in her crimson gown.
Mine were a happy cast could I but snare
Her beauty in a sonnet's fragile net.

[1] "Poems and Plays," Cincinnati, 1893, p. 109.

SONNET

Enamored architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says:
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.[1]

Celia Laighton Thaxter [1836-1894] has twelve sonnets in her *Poems,* New York, 1906. One other is found in Higginson.

BEETHOVEN

If God speaks anywhere, in any voice,
To us, His creatures, surely here and now
We hear Him, while the great chords seem to bow
Our heads, and all the symphony's breathless noise
Breaks over us with challenge to our souls!
Beethoven's music! From the mountain peaks
The strong, divine, compelling thunder rolls,
And, "Come up higher, come!" the words it speaks,
"Out of your darkened valleys of despair,
Behold I lift you upon mighty wings
Into Hope's living, reconciling air!
Breathe, and forget your life's perpetual stings;
Dream, folded on the breast of Patience sweet,
Some pulse of pitying love for you may beat!"[2]

[1] "Poems," New York, 1907, pp. 402 and 142.
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[2] "Poems," New York, 1906, p. 139.
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William Winter [1836-1917] wrote seven irregular sonnets.

Mary Mapes Dodge [1838-1905] wrote five sonnets of a quiet, sentimental, religious tone.

OVER THE WORLD

There is a time between our night and day,
A space between this world and the unknown,
Where none may enter as we stand alone
Save the one other single soul that may;
Then all is perfect if the two but stay.
It is the time when, the home-evening flown,
And "good-nights" sped in happy household tone,
We look out from the casement ere we pray.
Into the world of darkness deep and far
We gaze—each depth with its own deepest star,
That brightens as we turn, nor yet recedes
When we would search it with our sorest needs,—
O holy living-ground from heaven won!
O time beyond the night when day is done![1]

John Hay [1838-1905], secretary to Lincoln, and author of *Pike County Ballads,* has twenty-two sonnets in his *Poems,* 1916.

A HAUNTED ROOM

In the dim chamber whence but yesterday
Passed my belovèd, filled with awe I stand;
And haunting Loves fluttering on every hand
Whisper her praises who is far away.
A thousand delicate fancies glance and play
On every object which her robes have fanned,
And tenderest thoughts and hopes bloom and expand
In the sweet memory of her beauty's ray.
Ah! could that glass but hold the faintest trace
Of all the loveliness once mirrored there,

[1] "Along the Way," New York, 1879, p. 72.
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The clustering glory of the shadowy hair
That framed so well the dear young angel face!
But no, it shows my own face full of care,
And my heart is her beauty's dwelling-place.[1]

John White Chadwick [1840-1904] wrote thirty-two sonnets in all.

Robert Kelley Weeks [1840-1876] has fourteen sonnets in his *Collected Poems.*

BY THE LAKE

See how the restless melancholy lake
Gives all itself, too vainly evermore,
Up to the blankness of the barren shore
Which cannot answer it again, nor take
Warmth to its loveless life from lips that ache
With kissing and beseeching o'er and o'er.
O bitterness of life, not known before!
Who shall deliver it from loves that make
No answer to its yearning, strangely strong
To shut it in and waste its noblest powers?
Making a moan of what was meant for song,
And for its hope of growing grass and flowers,
Condemning it to see its best endeavor
End in slow foam on fruitless sands forever.[2]

Edward Rowland Sill [1841-1887] wrote ten sonnets, according to his *Poetical Works,* 1906.

THE BOOK OF HOURS

As one who reads a tale writ in a tongue
He only partly knows,—runs over it
And follows but the story, losing wit
And charm, and half the subtle links among
The haps and harms that the book's folks beset,—

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1916, p. 91.
[2] "Poems," N. Y., 1881, p. 233.

So do we with our life. Night comes, and morn:
I know that one has died and one is born;
That this by love and that by hate is met.
But all the grace and glory of it fail
To touch me, and the meanings they unfold.
The Spirit of the World hath told the tale,
And tells it: and 'tis wise and old.
But o'er the page there is a mist and veil:
I do not know the tongue in which 'tis told.[1]

The twenty-eight sonnets of Sidney Lanier [1842-1881] seem strangely mediocre for so excellent a student of verse. In his long poem, *Psalm of the West,* there are eight narrative sonnets, one of which is reprinted here. The first of the four sonnets entitled *Acknowledgment* is probably the best sonnet he wrote.

Of Lanier's twenty-eight sonnets, sixteen are Italian, eleven Shakespearean, and one irregular. In general, they are of a reflective nature.

From PSALM OF THE WEST

Ere we Gomera cleared, a coward cried,
Turn, turn: here be three caravels ahead,
From Portugal, to take us: we are dead!
Hold Westward, pilot, calmly I replied.
So when the last land down the horizon died,
Go back, go back! they prayed: *our hearts are lead.*
Friends, we are bound into the West, I said.
Then passed the wreck of a mast upon our side.
See (so they wept) *God's Warning! Admiral, turn!—*
Steersman, I said, *hold straight into the West.*
Then down the night we saw the meteor burn.
So do the very heavens in fire protest:
Good Admiral, put about! O Spain, dear Spain!—
Hold straight into the West, I said again.

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[1] "Poetical Works," New York, 1906, p. 349.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT—I

O age that half believ'st thou half believ'st,
Half doubt'st the substance of thine own half doubt,
And, half perceiving that thou half perceiv'st,
Stand'st at thy temple door, heart in, head out!
Lo! while thy heart's within, helping the choir,
Without, thine eyes range up and down the time,
Blinking at o'er bright science, smit with desire
To see and not to see. Hence crime on crime.
Yea, if the Christ (called thine) now paced yon street,
Thy halfness hot with His rebuke would swell;
Legions of scribes would rise and run and beat
His fair intolerable wholeness twice to hell.
Nay (so, dear Heart, thou whisperest in my soul),
'Tis a half time, yet Time will make it whole.[1]

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909] wrote ninety-six sonnets. *The New Day,* the first division of his complete works, contains thirty-four sonnets. They were probably inspired by Mrs. Browning, whose *Sonnets From the Portuguese* he edited, but are seldom as metrically felicitous. The sonnets in *The Celestial Passion* breathe a tender piety.

Sixty-seven of Gilder's sonnets are Italian, twenty are Shakespearean, and the other nine are otherwise constructed.

ON THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

This bronze doth keep the very form and mold
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that hold
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea
For storms to beat on; the lone agony
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men
As might some prophet of the elder day—

[1] "Poems," New York, 1891, pp. 124 and 77.
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Brooding above the tempest and the fray
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.
A power was his beyond the touch of art,
Of armed strength—his pure and mighty heart.

KEATS

Touch not with dark regret his perfect fame,
Sighing, "Had he but lived he had done so;"
Or, "Were his heart not eaten out with woe
John Keats had won a prouder, mightier name!"
Take him for what he was and did—nor blame
Blind fate for all he suffered. Thou shouldst know
Souls such as his escape no mortal blow—
No agony of joy, or sorrow, or shame!
"Whose name was writ in water!" What large laughter
Among the immortals when that word was brought!
Then when his fiery spirit rose flaming after
High towards the topmost heaven of heavens upcaught,
"All hail! our younger brother!" Shakespeare said,
And Dante nodded his imperial head.[1]

Melville Madison Bigelow [1846-1921] is represented by two sonnets in Higginson.

William Dean Howells said of the sonnets of Lloyd Mifflin [1846-1922]:

They possess a power, both pictorial and intellectual, which represents a new quality of thinking and feeling, or a new way of rendering the serious and significant aspects of life.

Of his sonnets, Mr. Mifflin himself writes:

Having always thought the Sonnet—althought the least popular—to be the most distinguished and the most exalted of all forms of English verse, I have devoted my literary life chiefly to its study and creation. I have published more than five hundred Sonnets [Five hundred and sixteen, to be exact.] in the Miltonic, and the true Guittonian

[1] "Poems," New York, 1908, pp. 117 and 135.
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form—beside a few showing structural innovations—and I have written, but not published, a large number of others.

The task of creating this amount of Poetry couched in that most intricate and difficult of forms can be adequately appreciated only by those who have attempted the work, and who have succeeded in doing it.

In this contribution to Sonnet literature, over five hundred themes have been treated.[1]

THE FLIGHT

Upon a cloud among the stars we stood:
The angel raised his hand, and looked, and said,
"Which world of all yon starry myriad
Shall we make wing to?" The still solitude
Became a harp whereon his voice and mood
Made spheral music round his haloed head.
I spoke—for then I had not long been dead—
"Let me look round upon the wastes, and brood
A moment on these orbs ere I decide . . .
What is yon lower star that beauteous shines,
And with soft splendor now incarnadines
Our wings?—There would I go, and there abide."
Then he, as one who some child's thought divines:
"That is the world where yesternight you died."

SEOSTRIS

Sole Lord of Hosts and very King of Kings,
He sits within the desert, carved in stone;
Inscrutable, colossal, and alone,
And ancienter than memory of things.
Graved on his front the sacred beetle clings;
Disdain sits on his lips; and in a frown
Scorn lives upon his forehead for a crown.
The affrighted ostrich does not dust her wings
Anear this Presence. The long caravan's
Dazed camels pause, and mute the Bedouins stare.
This symbol of past power more than man's
Presages doom. Kings look—and Kings despair:
The sceptres tremble in their jeweled hands
And dark thrones totter in the baleful air!

[1] "As Twilight Falls," N. Y., 1916, Preface.

ON THE TWILIGHT HEADLAND—THESEUS AND ARIADNE

Dear Love, lean nearer—let your finger-tips
Reach till they touch the rose within my palm.
Through the hushed dusk I feel the fragrant balm
Of your faint breathing as the tired breast dips
And rises, drowsful as a bee that sips
Honey too avid from the numbing flowers . . .
Close the sad eyes, and for one little hour
Let slumber soothe the dear, leave-taking lips.
Ah, sweet! were it not better for each heart
Before the cruel years achieve their will—
For us, who must irrevocably part,
To pass the lintel of the door of Death
Lip touching lip, I breathing faintly still
The poignant sweetness of your fading breath?

THE EVENING COMES

The evening comes: the boatman lifts the net,
Poles his canoe and leaves it on the shore;
So low the stream he does not use the oar;
The umber rocks rise like a parapet
Up through the purple and the violet,
And the faint-heard and never-ending roar
Of moving waters lessens more and more,
While each vague object looms a silhouette.
The light is going; but low overhead
Poises the glory of the evening star;
The fisher, silent on the rocky bar,
Drops a still line in pools of fading red;
And in the sky, where all the day lies dead,
Slowly the golden crescent sinks afar.[1]

Henry Augustine Beers [1847-1926] has four sonnets in his *Poems.*

Edgar Fawcett [1847-1904] wrote forty-four Italian sonnets, principally descriptive and reflective.

[1] "Collected Sonnets," London, 1905, pp. 5, 13, 31, and 105. Reprinted by permission of Dr. Houston Mifflin.

CROWNS

It chanced that in the dubious dusk of sleep
I seemed to attain that realm where mortals throw
All gross mortality earthward ere they go
Forth as frail spirits amid death's hollow deep.
All folly and sin was here that life may reap,
All desperate fear and hope, all joy or woe;
And here all precious crowns the exalted know,
Lay gathered in superb tumultuous heap!
Stooping toward these, I marked with silent awe
Their ponderous gold, or gems that beamed like day,
Or lovlier laurel that grand brows had worn;
But hid below the beauty of each, I saw
Continually, in grim recurrent way,
The poignance of one small red-rusted thorn![1]

Emma Lazarus [1849-1887] wrote thirty-three sonnets. They cover a wide variety of subjects, and are, in general, irregular in structure.

SYMPHONIC STUDIES (AFTER ROBERT SCHUMANN)

VII

EPILOGUE

Forth in the sunlit, rain-bathed air we stepped,
Sweet with the dripping grass and flowering vine,
And saw through irised clouds the pale sun shine.
Back o'er the hills the rain-mist slowly crept
Like a transparent curtain's silvery sheen;
And fronting us the painted bow was arched,
Whereunder the majestic cloud-shapes marched:
In the wet, yellowish light the dazzling green
Of lawn and bush and tree seemed stained with blue.
Our hearts o'erflowed with peace. With smiles we spake
Of partings in the past, of courage new,
Of high achievement, of the dreams that make
A wonder and a glory of our days,
And all life's music but a hymn of praise.[2]

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[1] "Song and Story," Boston, 1884, p. 168.
[2] "Poems," New York, 1889, Vol. I, p. 211.
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Arlo Bates [1850-1918] in his twenty-eight *Sonnets in Shadow* has written an elegiac sequence of great power.

SONNET XXVII

We must be nobler for our dead, be sure,
Than for the quick. We might their living eyes
Deceive with gloss of seeming; but all lies
Were vain to cheat a prescience spirit-pure.
Our soul's true worth and aim, however poor,
They see who watch us from some deathless skies
With glance death-quickened. That no sad surprise
Sting them in seeing, be ours to secure.
Living, our loved ones make us what they dream;
Dead, if they see, they know us as we are.
Henceforward we must be, not merely seem.
Bitterer woe than death it were by far
To fail their hopes who love us to redeem.
Loss were thrice loss that thus their faith should mar.[1]

Florence Earle Coates [1850-1927] wrote forty Italian sonnets. Most of them are well constructed; a few of them are of a high order.

INVIOLABLE

"And shall not Loveliness be loved forever?"
Euripedes

When I hear men discoursing idle things,
Who "beauty and corruption" would unite—
As who should say: "Now call we darkness bright!"
My wondering soul more passionately clings
To every image, every strain that sings
Of beauty—still, ah, still the world's delight!—
More valuing that bloom that knows not blight,
To which no touch of Time defacement brings.
From rocky Chios, from sweet Avon's side,
From Athens, Sicily—our earth to bless—
From each dear Land where Joy hath dwelt with Truth,

[1] "Sonnets in Shadow," Boston, 1887, No. XXVII.

It comes adown Time's inexhausted tide
In myriad form, the ancient Loveliness,
Wearing its glory of immortal youth![1]

George Parsons Lathrop [1851-1898] wrote four Italian sonnets.

The forty-three sonnets of Maurice Francis Egan [1852-1924] are mostly of a religious nature. *Order,* reprinted here, is probably his best.

ORDER
(Our Lord Speaks.)

And though I fill thy heart with earnest love,
Yet in true order must thy heart love me;
For without order can no virtue be.
By thine own virtue, then, I, from above,
Stand in thy soul; and so, most earnestly,
Must love from turmoil be kept wholly free.
The life of fruitful trees, the seasons of
The circling year, move gently as a dove.
I measured all the things upon the earth;
Love ordered them, and order kept them fair,
And love to order must be truly wed.
O soul, why all this heat of little worth?
Why cast out order with no thought or care?
For by love's warmth must life be governèd.[2]

Charles Edwin Markham [1852-] has written at least twenty-one sonnets.

KEATS A-DYING

Often of that Last Hour I lie and think;
I see, thee, Keats, nearing the Deathway dim—
See Severn in his noiseless hurry, him

[1] "Poems," New York, 1916, Vol. I, p. 249.
Reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.
[2] "Songs and Sonnets," Chicago, 1892, p. 131.

Who leaned above thee fading on the brink.

. . . . . .

What is that wild light through the window chink?
Is it the burning feet of cherubim?
Or is it the white moon on western rim—
Saint Agnes' moon beginning now to sink?
How did Death come—with sounds of water-stir?
With forms of beauty breaking at the lips?
With field pipes and the scent of blooming fir?
Or came it hurrying like a last eclipse,
Sweeping the world away like gossamer,
Blotting the moon, the mountains, and the ships? [1]

Henry VanDyke [1852-] has also written one of his best sonnets on Keats. Most of his thirty-two sonnets are occasional or literary in character.

KEATS

The melancholy gift Aurora gained
From Jove, that her sad lover should not see
The face of death, no goddess asked for thee,
My Keats! But when the scarlet blood-drop stained
Thy pillow, thou didst read the fate ordained,—
Brief life, wild love, a flight of poesy!
And then,—a shadow fell on Italy:
Thy star went down before its brightness waned.
Yet thou hast won the gift Tithonus missed:
Never to feel the pain of growing old,
Nor lose the blissful sight of beauty's truth,
But with the ardent lips Urania kissed
To breathe thy song, and ere thy heart grew cold,
Become the Poet of Immortal Youth.[2]

Robert Underwood Johnson [1853-] is the author of at least nineteen Italian sonnets, mostly occasional or complimentary in character.

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[1] "The Man With the Hoe, and Other Poems," New York, 1902, p. 59. Reprinted by special permission of the author.

[2] "Poems," New York, 1920, p. 426. Reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Charles Scribner's Sons.

James Whitcomb Riley [1853-1916] wrote fourteen Italian sonnets.

Charles Leonard Moore [1854-] is the author of a hundred Shakespearean sonnets.

THE SPRING RETURNS

The Spring returns! What matters then that War
On the horizon like a beacon burns,
That Death ascends, man's most desirèd star,
That Darkness is his hope? The Spring returns!
Triumphant through the wider-archèd cope
She comes, she comes, unto her tyranny,
And at her coronation are set ope
The prisons of the mind, and man is free!
The beggar-garbed or over-bent with snows,
Each mortal, long defeated, disallowed,
Feeling her touch, grows stronger-limbed, and knows
The purple on his shoulders, and is proud.
The Spring returns! O madness beyond sense,
Breed in our bones thine own omnipotence.[1]

Edith Matilda Thomas [1854-1925] wrote one hundred and forty-three sonnets, on many themes. Not one is poor, and many are very fine in thought and execution. All but three are Italian in form.

SONNET

In thy withdrawal from the near and known,
Past any touch of hands, past sight, past call,
Thrice have I lost thee,—once my childhood's all,
When thou and I it seemed did wait alone
On the green curve of earth close to God's throne,
And hearken well what secrets He let fall
About this lower kingdom's great and small,
In whisper and by sign now fainter grown.

[1] "A Book of Day Dreams," New York, 1892, Sonnet 52.
Reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Henry Holt and Company.

> Again I lose thee, Voice of Courage clear,
> Thou Soul of Youth that didst my youth upstay!
> And yet again I lose thee,—loss most dear!
> For now, when I before thee hoped to lay
> Some fruitage of the slow responsive year,
> Thou, tarrying not, art gone the Lonely Way.[1]

The *Poems* of Henry Cuyler Bunner [1855-1896] contain ten sonnets.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox [1855-1919] wrote at least thirty sonnets, principally in the English form.

In George Woodberry [1855-] American literature possesses one of its most accomplished writers of the Italian sonnet.

> Mr. Woodberry has . . . something to say; and if he says it rather with grace and cultivation as to form, than with any startling surprises of artistic effect, his work, in its essence, in its spirit, is none the less creative, and upon this side its strength lies. It is ethical and intellectual rather than emotional poetry.[2]

All but two of Mr. Woodberry's ninety-three sonnets are in the Italian form.

To the author of this study, Mr. Woodberry's supreme achievement is *Ideal Passion,* a magnificent sequence of forty-two sonnets. Written with almost flawless technique, they vibrate with a subtly expressed love of ideal beauty. "No essay on the American sonnet," writes Thomas S. Jones, himself a sonneteer of unique power, "would be complete without praise of this splendid sequence." [3]

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[1] "The Inverted Torch," New York, 1890, p. 65.
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[2] Jessie B. Rittenhouse, "Younger American Poets," p. 197.
[3] Letter to the author.

IDEAL PASSION—I

My lady ne'er hath given herself to me
In mortal ways, nor on my eyes to hold
Her image; in a flying marble fold
Of Hellas once I saw eternity
Flutter about her form; all nature she
Inspirits, but round her being there is rolled
The inextinguishable beauty old
Of the far-shining mountains and the sea.
Now all my manhood doth enrich her shrine,
Where first the young boy stored all hope, all fear.
Fortune and fame and love be never mine,
Since, seeking these, to her I were less dear!
Albeit she hides herself in the divine,
Always and everywhere I feel her near.

IDEAL PASSION—XIX

O Sacred Love, and thou, O Love Profane,
Great branches issuing from the viny stock
Fast-rooted in earth's old primeval rock,
Single your nature is, though seeming twain.
The must of life is all one crimson stain
Of vintage; there all generations flock;
The rosy trampling feet let no saint mock,
The cup divine no reveller disdain!
True love repeals all codes that have defined
Higher and lower in its ministry;
True love hath no diversity of kind,
And undivided must its nature be;
Earthly or heavenly, my soul divined,
Only through passion cometh purity.[1]

AT GIBRALTAR—I

England, I stand on thy imperial ground,
Not all a stranger; as thy bugles blow,
I feel within my blood old battles flow—
The blood whose ancient founts in thee are found.

[1] "Ideal Passion," New York, 1917.
"The Roamer and Other Poems," New York, 1920.
These two sonnets from "Ideal Passion" are reprinted by special permission of the author, and by special permission of, and arrangement with, Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Still surging dark against the Christian bound
Wide Islam presses; well its peoples know
Thy heights that watch them wandering below;
I think how Lucknow heard their gathering sound.
I turn, and meet the cruel, turbaned face,
England, 'tis sweet to be so much thy son!
I feel the conqueror in my blood and race;
Last night Trafalgar awed me, and today
Gibraltar wakened; hark, thy evening gun
Startles the desert over Africa.

AT GIBRALTAR—II

Thou art the rock of empire, set mid-seas
Between the East and West, that God has built;
Advance thy Roman borders where thou wilt,
While run thy armies true with His decrees;
Law, justice, liberty—great gifts are these;
Watch that they spread where English blood is spilt,
Lest, mixed and sullied with his country's guilt,
The soldier's life-stream flow, and Heaven displease!
Two swords there are: one naked, apt to smite,
Thy blade of war; and, battle-storied, one
Rejoices in the sheath, and hides from light.
American I am; would wars were done!
Now westward, look, my country bids good-night—
Peace to the world from ports without a gun.[1]

James Berry Bensel [1856-1886] wrote ten Italian sonnets.

Caroline Hazard [1856-] has written in *Lenten Sonnets, Interlude,* and *A Cycle of Grief* a sequence of sixty-three finely constructed sonnets. They deal almost entirely with the author's personal intimate feelings of love and reverence, and, as definitely religious sonnets, are as fine as any in our literature. Every one of Miss Hazard's ninety-two sonnets is constructed on the scheme: *abba abba. cdceed.*

[1] "Poems," New York, 1903, pp. 3-4.
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THE NAME

I would not know Thee as the Good Supreme,
Or as an overruling Providence,
Or name Thee by a name which shows my sense
Of Thine infinitude, and which must seem
To mark my distance. In the turbid stream
Of sharp affliction such ideas immense
Elude my grasp, and give a vain pretense
Of help and succor, idle as a dream.
But breathe Thy name upon my waiting soul,
And come Thyself to me, transcendent Guest;
Then naught I fear, whatever storms may roll.
Then shall I be the sparrow in Thine hand
To rise or fall like it at Thy command;
Then shall I find in Thee my perfect rest.[1]

Lizette Woodworth Reese [1856-] is another of America's most competent sonneteers. Her seventy-nine sonnets are in various forms, the prevailing one being *abba cddc efg efg,* and are, in general, sonnets of reflection and description. In *Tears,* Miss Reese has surpassed most American achievement, and has written one of the outstanding individual sonnets of our literature.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,

[1] "A Scallop Shell of Quiet," New York, 1908, No. XVII.
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Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep;
Homer his sight; David his little lad.

SPINNING TOPS

All day, all day, the village lads are out—
It is so pleasant and so clear a weather—
And my lad, too, is somewhere thereabout;
For as of old they spin their tops together.
Out past the ivied fences do they crowd;
I hear their shouts, now one, and now another;
But his above them all, so sweetly loud;
They hear it not—but I, I am his mother.
A cloudy thing, I see him in the sun,
That little lad, so long and long forgot,
By other lads in this and any weather:
And still he keeps his playtimes, one by one;
And still, although his neighbors know it not,
Day-long, week-long, they spin their tops together.[1]

SUNRISE

The east is yellow as a daffodil.
Three steeples—three stark swarthy arms—are thrust
Up from the town. The gnarled poplars thrill
Down the long street in some keen salty gust—
Straight from the sea and all the sailing ships—
Turn white, black, white again, with noises sweet
And swift. Back of the night the last star slips.
High up the air is motionless, a sheet
Of light. The east grows yellower apace,
And trembles: then, once more, and suddenly,
The salt wind blows, and in that moment's space
Flame roofs, and poplar tops, and steeples three;
From out the mist that wraps the river-ways,
The little boats, like torches, start ablaze.[2]

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[1] "A Wayside Lute," Portland, Me., 1916, pp. 16 and 35.
[2] "A Branch of May," Portland, Me., 1909, p. 16.

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Frank L. Stanton [1857-1927] wrote seven Italian sonnets.

This single sonnet by Julie Wetherill Baker [1858-] is worth preserving.

A DAY OF JOY

Thou canst not rob me of that happy day,
Though joy from out earth's choral song has ceased,
And all things pass, the greatest as the least.
So may the red rose weep its leaves away,
And summer from her sumptuous prime decay,
And silence fall upon the season's feast,
And darkness on the dawn-enkindled east,
Whence the sun leaps with bright and beckoning ray:
That day was mine. And as the lonely years
Wind downward toward death's door that glooms afar,
One memory shall banish all my fears,—
A talisman that naught can dull or mar,—
And I shall see it from the way of tears,
Shine 'mid the grave-dust like a fallen star.[1]

Charles Henry Crandall [1858-1923], the editor of a well-known collection of American sonnets, has himself written twelve very competent Italian sonnets.

Katherine Lee Bates [1859-1929] wrote sixty-one Italian sonnets on various themes, the greater number in a sequence *In Bohemia.*

Helen Gray Cone [1859-] has written twenty-five excellent sonnets, one of the best being reprinted here.

ON FIRST READING LANDOR'S HELLENICS

Two sauntering hand in hand, one happy day,
Along a pleasant path that neither knew,
Came, glad and startled, on the sudden blue,
With sails unclouded of a sunny bay,
And hollowing toward the wave a meadow, gray

[1] "New York Critic," New Series, Vol. XII, p. 285.

With honey-giving growths thick-spread as dew.
There goatskin-girt, with limbs like bronze in hue,
Free bathed in sun and wind, a shepherd lay,
Asleep, his reed pipe fallen by his knee;
And late, it seemed, a song had left his lips.
We heard but lapping ripple, prattling bee
Above the thyme's dim-purple, downy tips;
Beyond, once beat by oars of beakèd ships,
Far outward swept the calm, the storied sea.[1]

Harriet Monroe [1860-] has written at least twenty-one sonnets.

Clinton Scollard [1860-] is the author of at least sixty-seven sonnets, all in the Italian form, and all technically excellent. The greater number are descriptive.

EGYPT

The sun, a scarabæus of bronze gold,
Slowly ascends the heaven's eastern wall;
The immemorial palm-trees, towering tall,
Where Nile rolls seaward, fold on tawny fold,
Are mirrored in the water; and behold,
Above them, hued like skies at evenfall,
Flamingoes in their flight majestical
Wing as they winged ere yet the world waxed old.
Silence and Death and Time and all things hoar
Brood here,—and man, how like a shade he seems,
Now seen, now gone, ephemera of an hour!
Pharoah and Ptolemy, mighty names of yore,
Today are but as sounds dim-heard in dreams,
And but as shards the remnant of their power![2]

Frank Dempster Sherman [1860-1916] and Richard Burton [1861-] have written eighteen and twenty sonnets respectively.

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[1] "Oberon and Puck," New York, 1885, p. 83.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Poems," New York, 1914, p. 28.
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Louise Imogen Guiney [1861-1920] wrote forty-six sonnets, all Italian in form. The *Sonnets Written at Oxford* mark, as a whole, her finest work in this form, although the twelve London sonnets are full of strong lines and images.

ROOKS: NEW COLLEGE GARDENS

Through rosy clouds and over thorny towers,
Their wings with darkling autumn distance filled,
From Isis' valley border, many-hilled,
The rooks are crowding home as evening lowers:
Not for men only, and their musing hours
By battled walls did gracious Wykeham build
These dewy spaces early sown and stilled,
These dearest inland melancholy bowers.
Blest birds! A book held open on the knee
Below, is all they guess of Adam's blight:
With surer art the while, and simpler rite,
They gather power in some monastic tree
Where breathe against their docile breasts by night
The scholar's star, the star of sanctity.

SUNDAY CHIMES IN THE CITY

Across the bridge where in the morning blow
The wrinkled tide turns homeward, and is fain
Homeward to drag the black sea-goer's chain,
And the long yards by Dowgate dipping low;
Across dispeopled ways, patient and slow,
Saint Magnus and Saint Dunstan call in vain:
From Wren's forgotten belfries, in the rain,
Down the black wharves the dropping octaves go.
Forbid not these! Though no man heed, they shower
A subtle beauty on the empty hour,
From all their dark throats aching and outblown;
Aye in the prayerless places welcome most,
Like the last gull that up some naked coast
Displays her white and steady wing, alone.[1]

[1] "Happy Ending," New York, 1909, pp. 154 and 167.

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Every one of the fourteen sonnets of Sophie Jewett [1861-1909] is commendable for dignity of thought and grace of diction.

SEPARATION

Along the eastern shore the low waves creep,
Making a ceaseless music on the sand,
A song that gulls and curlews understand,
The lullaby that sings the day to sleep.
A thousand miles afar, the grim pines keep
Unending watch upon a shoreless land,
Yet through their tops, swept by some wizard hand,
The sound of surf comes singing up the steep.
Sweet, thou canst hear the tidal litany;
I, mid the pines land-wearied, may but dream
Of the far shore; but though the distance seem
Between us fixed, unpassable, to me
Cometh thy soul's voice, chanting love's old theme,
And mine doth answer, as the pines the sea.[1]

Langdon Elwyn Mitchell [1862-] has written at least twenty-three sonnets, eleven of them as a sequence.

Edith Wharton [1862-] has written seventeen Italian sonnets of great merit. *The Mortal Lease,* a sequence of eight, is especially noteworthy.

THE MORTAL LEASE—II

Because our kiss is as the moon to draw
The mounting waters of that red-lit sea
That circles brain with sense, and bids us be
The playthings of an elemental law,
Shall we forego the deeper touch of awe
On love's extremest pinnacle, where we,
Winging the vistas of infinity,
Gigantic on the mist our shadows saw?

[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1910, p. 11.
Reprinted by special permission of Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

Shall kinship with the dim first-moving clod
Not draw the folded pinion from the soul,
And shall we not, by spirals vision-trod,
Reach upward to some still-retreating goal,
As earth, escaping from the night's control,
Drinks at the fount of morning like a god?

EXPERIENCE—II

O Death, we come full-handed to thy gate,
Rich with strange burden of the mingled years,
Gains and renunciations, mirth and tears,
And love's oblivion, and remembering hate,
Nor know we what compulsion laid such freight
Upon our souls—and shall our hopes and fears
Buy nothing of thee, Death? Behold our wares,
And sell us the one joy for which we wait.
Had we lived longer, life had such for sale,
With the last coin of sorrow purchased cheap,
But now we stand before thy shadowy pale,
And all our longings lie within thy keep—
Death, can it be the years shall naught avail?

"Not so," Death answered, "they shall purchase sleep."[1]

Of his sixty-one sonnets, George Santayana [1863-] himself writes:

The verses of a philosopher will be essentially epigrams, like those which the Greek sages composed; they will moralize the spectacle, whether it be some personal passion or some larger aspect of nature.[2]

SONNETS

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;

[1] "Artemis to Actaeon," N. Y., 1909, pp. 38 and 46.
Reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Charles Scribner's Sons.
[2] "Poems," New York, 1923, Preface, p. XIII.

To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

Among the myriad voices of the spring
What were the voice of my supreme desire,
What were my cry amid the vernal choir,
Or my complaint before the gods that sing?
O too late love of flight on wounded wing,
Infinite hope my lips should not suspire,
Why, when the world is thine, my grief require,
Or mock my dear-bought patience with thy sting?
Though I be mute, the birds will in the boughs
Sing as in every April they have sung,
And, though I die, the incense of heart vows
Will float to heaven, as when I was young.
But, O ye beauties I must never see,
How great a lover have you lost in me!

The world will say, "What mystic love is this?
What ghostly mistress? What angelic friend?"
Read, masters, your own passion to the end,
And tell me then if I have writ amiss.
When all loves die that hang upon a kiss,
And must with cavil and with chance contend,
Their risen selves with the eternal blend
Where perfect dying is their perfect bliss.
And might I kiss her once, asleep or dead,
Upon the forehead or the globèd eyes,
Or where the gold is parted on her head,
That kiss would help me on to paradise.
As if I kissed the consecrated bread
In which the buried soul of Jesus lies.[1]

[1] "Poems," New York, 1923, pp. 5, 25, and 43.
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Richard Hovey [1864-1900] wrote forty-three sonnets in all. Some of them are found in the volumes of verse which were published jointly by Hovey and Bliss Carman.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914] has written, with some few individual exceptions, the best "nature" sonnets in our literature. What William Dean Howells said of his poetry in general applies with equal force to his sonnets in particular:

> He has the gift, in a measure that I do not think surpassed in any other poet, of touching some smallest or commonest thing in nature, and making it live from the manifold associations in which we have our being, and glow thereafter with an inextinguishable beauty. . . . An interesting and charming trait of his poetry is its constant theme of youth and its limit within the range that the emotions and aspirations of youth take. He might indeed be called the poet of youth if he resented being called the poet of nature.[1]

Of Cawein's seventy-nine sonnets, seventy-two are regularly Italian in form.

BEFORE THE END

How does the Autumn in her mind conclude
The tragic masque her frosty pencil writes,
Broad on the pages of the days and nights,
In burning lines of orchard, wold, and wood?
What lovelier forms—that at the year's door stood
At spectral wait—with wildly wasted lights
Shall enter? and with melancholy rites
Inaugurate their sadder sisterhood?—
Sorrow, who lifts a signal hand, and slow
The green leaf fevers, falling ere it dies;
Regret, whose pale lips summon: and gaunt Woe
Wakes the wild wind-harps with sonorous sighs;
And Sleep, who sits with poppied eyes and sees
The earth and sky grow dream-accessories.

[1] "North American Review," Vol. 187 (Jan. 1908), pp. 125-126.

THE COVERED BRIDGE

There, from its entrance, lost in matted vines,—
Where in the valley foams a waterfall,—
Is glimpsed a ruined mill's remaining wall;
Here, by the road, the black-eyed Susan mines
Hot brass and bronze; the trumpet-trailer shines
Red as the plumage of the cardinal.
Faint from the forest comes the rain-crow's call
Where dusty Summer dreams among the pines.
This is the spot where Spring writes wildflower verses
In primrose pink, while, drowsing o'er his reins,
The ploughman, all unnoticing, plows along:
And there the Autumn opens weedy purses
Of sleepy silver, while the corn-piled wains
Rumble the bridge like some deep throat of song.

UNANSWERED

How long ago it is since we went Maying!
Since she and I went Maying long ago!
The years have left my forehead lined, I know,
Have thinned my hair around the temples graying.
Ah, time will change us; yea, I hear it saying—
"She, too, grows old: the face of rose and snow
Has lost its freshness: in the hair's brown glow
Some strands of silver sadly, too, are straying.
The form you knew, whose beauty so enspelled,
Has lost the litheness of its loveliness:
And all the gladness that her blue eyes held
Tears and the world have hardened with distress."—
"True! true!" I answer, "O ye years that part!
These things have changed—but is her heart, her heart?"

UNCALLED

As one, who, journeying westward with the sun,
Beholds at length from the up-towering hills,
Far off, a land unspeakable beauty fills,
Circean peaks and vales of Avalon:
And, sinking weary, watches, one by one
The big seas beat between; and knows it skills
No more to try; that now, as Heaven wills,
This is the hopeless end, that all is done:

So 'tis with him, whom long a vision led
In quest of beauty, and who finds at last,
She lies beyond his effort; all the waves
Of all the world between them: while the dead,
The myriad dead, who populate the Past
With failure, hail him from forgotten graves.[1]

William Vaughn Moody [1869-1910] has but one sonnet in his collected poetical works.

In Edwin Arlington Robinson [1869-] we have a poet who stands supremely high in the list of American sonneteers. This is true in spite of weaknesses that are not slow in manifesting themselves to the most casual reader. His greatest weakness is an enigmatical quality which is but an excess of that magnificent reticence which is his greatest virtue. In both of these respects he is reminiscent of and comparable to Browning. In such a sonnet as *Fleming Helphenstine* we see admirably how he loves to seize upon some subtle aspect, permanent or fleeting, of a man or of men.

In theme, Robinson's sonnets are descriptive or reflective, with but few exceptions. Although he writes all forms of the sonnet, he prefers the Italian, seventy-seven of his eighty-nine sonnets being in that form. Of these Italian sonnets, twenty-three have the sestet most used by American sonneteers, i. e., *cdecde*.

THE DEAD VILLAGE

Here there is death. But even here, they say,
Here where the dull sun shines this afternoon
As desolate as ever the dead moon
Did glimmer on dead Sardis, men were gay;
And there were little children here to play,
With small soft hands that once did keep in tune

[1] "Poems," Boston, 1907, Vol. III, pp. 226, 231, 463, and 480.
These four sonnets are reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, John P. Morton and Company, Publishers, Louisville, Kentucky.

The strings that stretch from heaven, till too soon
The change came, and the music passed away.
Now there is nothing but the ghosts of things,—
No life, no love, no children, and no men;
And over the forgotten place there clings
The strange and unrememberable light
That is in dreams. The music failed, and then
God frowned, and shut the village from His sight.

SONNET

Just as I wonder at the twofold screen
Of twisted innocence that you would plait
For eyes that uncourageously await
The coming of a kingdom that has been,
So do I wonder what God's love can mean
To you that all so strangely estimate
The purpose and the consequent estate
Of one short shuddering step to the Unseen.
No, I have not your backward faith to shrink
Love-faring from the doorway of God's home
To find Him in the names of buried men;
Nor your ingenious recreance to think
We cherish, in the life that is to come,
The scattered features of dead friends again.

SONNET

The master and the slave go hand in hand,
Though touch be lost. The poet is a slave,
And there be kings do sorrowfully crave
The joyance that a scullion may command.
But, ah, the sonnet-slave must understand
The mission of his bondage, or the grave
May clasp his bones, or ever he shall save
The perfect word that is the poet's wand.
The sonnet is a crown, whereof the rhymes
Are for Thought's purest gold the jewel-stones;
But shapes and echoes that are never done
Will haunt the workshop, as regret sometimes
Will bring with human yearning to sad thrones
The crash of battles that are never won.

L'ENVOI

Now in a thought, now in a shadowed word,
Now in a voice that thrills eternity,
Ever there comes an onward phrase to me
Of some transcendent music I have heard;
No piteous thing by soft hands dulcimered,
No trumpet crash of blood-sick victory,
But a glad strain of some vast harmony
That no brief mortal touch has ever stirred.
There is no music in the world like this,
No character wherewith to set it down,
No kind of instrument to make it sing.
No kind of instrument? Ah, yes, there is;
And after time and place are overthrown,
God's touch will keep its one chord quivering.[1]

George Sterling [1869-1927] stands high in the ranks of American sonneteers. He wrote no less than two hundred and twenty-six sonnets, every one Italian in form, and of a workmanship beyond cavil. Of this large number of Petrarchan sonnets, one hundred and fourteen have the sestet *cdecde*, the outstanding sestet of our sonnet literature. An even hundred of Sterling's sonnets form a remarkably fine sequence of passionate love sonnets, entitled *Sonnets to Craig*.

BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky,
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
When cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.
And least of all he holds the human swarm—
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one

[1] "Sonnets," N. Y., 1928, pp. 11, 12, 25, and 30.
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When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.[1]

SONNET ON SLEEP—II

Life holds a different past with every man,
Though to one sea her many streams descend.
To some she stands a foe, to some a friend,
Devising each her benison or ban;
And one is saint, and one is courtesan;
One labors; one is idle to the end.
Of all her children none shall comprehend
Whether she strives in madness or with plan.
But Death has one condition for us all,
And he that in the pyramid's deep core
Lies with the graven adamant for pall
In no profounder pit of silence sleeps
Than he who has his grave by some low shore
To which the thunder-bosomed ocean weeps.[2]

Henry Aylett Sampson [1870-1920] wrote thirty-six uniformly well-constructed Italian sonnets.

Arthur Guiterman [1871-] has written but one sonnet.

Mary Aldis [1872-] has, in *Seven Sad Sonnets,* used the sonnet as a stanza in a brief narrative poem. We shall find William Ellery Leonard doing the same thing supremely in *Two Lives.*

THE WANDERING ONE

While he to whom her vexing thoughts still clung
Went wearily philandering on his way;
He tried them slightly worn, he tried them young,

[1] "Selected Poems," New York, 1923, p. 159.
"Thirty-five Sonnets," San Francisco, 1917, p. 8.
[2] "The Caged Eagle," San Francisco, 1916, p. 71.
"Thirty-five Sonnets," San Francisco, 1917, p. 20.
Reprinted by special permission of A. M. Robertson, San Francisco, California.

He tried them sorrowful, he tried them gay.
He said, and thought, he had not loved before;
He shrined a picture on his memory-shelf;
And as each loved one left his closing door
He took grave counsel with his puzzled self.
"There is no love. We for a moment stand
And hold at bay inevitable pain,
Aghast and passionate, and hand in hand,
Before we face our loneliness again."
Perhaps he made a rhyme; but quite forgot
Before another came that love was not.[1]

Leonora Speyer [1872-] has written at least eight sonnets on various themes. The one reprinted here is as fine as any in contemporary American literature.

PROTEST IN PASSING

This house of flesh was never loved of me!
This frail white arrogance of sounding towers,
How it has held me through the ordained hours
That I must pass to whiter dignity.
When sleep came beckoning, how I leapt, for then
I knew the low, half-flights of hampered wing,
But now there comes a surer Beckoning,
I go, nor shall endure these rooms again.
I have been held too long by closed-in walls,
By masonry of muscle, blood, and bone,
This quaking house of flesh that was my own—
High roof-tree of the heart, see, how it falls!
I go . . . but pause upon the threshold's rust
To shake from off my feet my own dead dust.[2]

George Cabot Lodge [1873-1909] wrote one hundred and sixty-four sonnets, many of them of great power. His sequence *Death,* in memory of Trumbull Stickney, is one of the finest

[1] "Poetry," Vol. 21, p. 203.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Fiddler's Farewell," N. Y., 1926, p. 83.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.

elegiac sonnet sequences in American or English literature. Theodore Roosevelt, in his introduction to Lodge's *Poems and Dramas,* has this very apt criticism of his friend's poetry:

> . . . extraordinary strength and originality and an extraordinary wealth of thought and diction. Indeed, at first, there was almost too great strength and wealth; the depth and wide play of the thought were obscured by the very brilliance of the way in which it was set forth.

SONNET XXXIV

Tell me again, and then lift up to me
Those frail white arms of thine and touch my face,
And wrap me wholly in thine eyes' embrace,
Till God's sure hand run fire round me and thee.
Tell me again, and let thy speaking be
A faint phrased echo, delicate as lace,
Of seas sonorous through the void of space,
The low, lost rhythm of immensity.
Tell me again, and where thy breasts divide
Pillow my weariness—the breath of fall
Shall blow crisp, crimson leaves upon thy hair;
Thy presence is as where a song has died,
And left its memory grieving over all
This vital solitude of autumn air.[1]

QUESTIONS

Curious of life and love and death they stand
Outward along the shadowy verge of thought;
Rebels and deicides, they rise unsought
And spare no creed and yield to no command.
Even though at last we seem to understand,
Yet, when our eyes grow sphered to the new light,
We find them, outposts in the forward night,
Their eyes still restless with the same demand.
On all the heights and at the farthest goal
Set by the seers and christs of yesterday,
They watch and wait and ask the onward way;
They storm the citadels of faith and youth,
And, gazing always for the stars of Truth,
Crowd in the glimmering windows of the Soul.[2]

[1] "Poems and Dramas," New York, 1911, Vol. I, p. 107.
[2] Ibid, Vol. II, p. 27.

DEATH—XXII

We said no word of all men use to say,
But, when the childish jargon of the priest
And all the stale formalities had ceased,
We laid him in the earth and went away.
Mysteriously thereafter all that day
We felt, like adepts at a sacred feast,
Rapt in austere rejoicing, and released
From all dark bounds of life's dim-vistaed way.
And all that night about me in the gloom
I felt great consummations, and the stir
Of high events, and in the dawn's first breath
I saw a presence by the empty tomb,
Who said, "I am the Great Deliverer!
I am the Life!"—I looked, and it was Death.

ILION—I

They turned into the day-break, and the light
Lay level in their eyes. They held the free
Fortunate wind across the blue bland sea:
Of all their lives the flame burned wild and bright.
Clear as the eyes of Helen shone by night
The lordly stars, which spelled their destiny;
The sun's perennial splendor seemed to be
Gold as the hair of Helen in their sight.
But Agamemnon, saviour of the fleet,
Only forever saw, with haunted eyes,
Iphigeneia bleeding at his feet;
And, in prophetic rapture, felt, too late,
Fierce as the eyes of Clytemnestra's hate,
Burst from his palsied tongue death's strangling cries![1]

Ernest E. Cummings [1874-] has written seventeen of what, for want of a better name, may be called "ultra-modern" sonnets.

[1] Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 82 and 176.

These four sonnets are reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.

The fifty sonnets, all in the form *abba acca deed ff,* which comprise Mahlon Leonard Fisher's [1874-] *Sonnets—First Series* have unmistakable dignity of style and a no less unmistakable sincerity of feeling.

SONNET

As an old mercer in some sleepy town
Swings wide his windows new day after day,
Sets all his wares around in arch array
To please the taste of passers up and down,—
His hoard of handy things of trite renown,
Of sweets and spices and of faint perfumes,
Of silks and prints,—and at the last illumes
His tiny panes to foil the evening's frown;
So Nature spreads her proffered treasures: such
As daily dazzle at the morning's rise,—
Fair show of isle and ocean merchandise,
And airy offerings filmy to the touch;
Then, lest we like not these, in Dark's bazaars
She nightly tempts us with her store of stars.[1]

The seventeen sonnets of Theodosia Garrison [1874-] are marked by real feeling, and genuine felicity of thought and expression.

THE EARTH CRY

It is all calm, this love you give to me.
My life goes gently in a cloistered hold,
Whose windows open to the scanty gold
Of tender twilight on a waveless sea.
This is the joy I thought might never be,
The comfort granted and the ease untold;
This is the dream fulfilled, that in the old
Despiteful days I sought for wearily.
Oh strange, most strange, that from this peace I turn
To think of one who rode a dangerous way,
One night of winds beneath a moon-mad sky,

[1] "Sonnets—A First Series," N. Y., 1917, p. 1.
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Reckless as flame that leaps to cleave and burn,
A wild glad lover speeding to obey
The mocking fate that bade him kiss and die.[1]

The forty-one sonnets of Amy Lowell [1874-1925] are uniformly Italian, past criticism in their technique, and compact of thought.

Josephine Preston Peabody [1874-1922] wrote fifteen sonnets, one of which is reprinted.

SONNET IN A GARDEN

Dumb mother of all music, let me rest
On thy great heart while summer days pass by;
While all the heat up-quivers, let me lie
Close gathered to the fragrance of thy breast.
Let not the pipe of birds from some high nest
Give voice unto a thought of melody,
Nor dreaming clouds afloat along the sky
Meet any wind of promise from the west.
Save for that grassy breath that never mars
The peace, but seems a musing of thine own,
Keep thy dear silence. So, embraced, alone,
Forgetful of relentless prison bars,
My soul shall hear all songs, unsung, unknown,
Uprising with the breath of all the stars.[2]

Paul Shivell [1874-] has written at least twenty-nine sonnets.

The fifty-two sonnets of Anna Hempstead Branch [1875-] are all of more than ordinary merit.

[1] "The Earth Cry and Other Poems," New York, 1910, p. 122.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Poems," N. Y., 1927, p. 367.
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A SONNET FOR THE EARTH

When I am weary for delight and spent,
Even as a bird that tries too long its wings
Will nest awhile amid the grass and sings,
So I drop downward from the wonderment
Of timelessness and space, in which were blent
The wind, the sunshine and the wanderings
Of all the planets—to the little things
That are my grass and flowers, and am content.
Or if in flight my wings should beat so far
From the kind grass that is so cool and deep
That it must poise among the winds on high—
Yet will I sing to thee from star to star,
Piercing thy sunshine, and will always keep
A song for thee amid the farthest sky.[1]

Willa Cather [1875-] is the author of seven sonnets, one of which is reprinted here.

AFTERMATH

Can'st thou conjure a vanished morn of spring,
Or bid the ashes of the sunset glow
Again to redness? Are we strong to wring
From trodden grapes the juice drunk long ago?
Can leafy longings stir in Autumn's blood,
Or can I wear a pearl dissolved in wine,
Or go a-Maying in a winter wood,
Or paint with youth thy wasted cheek, or mine?
What bloom, then, shall abide, since ours hath sped?
Thou art more lost to me than they who dwell
In Egypt's sepulchres, long ages fled;
And would I touch—Ah me! I might as well
Covet the gold of Helen's vanished head,
Or kiss back Cleopatra from the dead.[2]

Louise Driscoll [1875-] has written but three sonnets.

[1] "The Shoes That Danced," N. Y., 1905, p. 63.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "April Twilight," N. Y., 1923, p. 40.
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SONNET

In jungles where the bushmaster was grim
Coiled death by thick, black, iridescent gleams
Of slowly moving, mud-dammed tropic streams,
The humming bird heard something calling him,
Not parrots, green and gold, nor any slim
High piping lizard where the wet grass teems
With crawling, creeping things; but out of dreams
Beyond the sunrise and the mountain rim.
He saw the condor spreading like a tree,
And knew how small he was, but cool and far
The call came over the great Gulf's hot blue;
And as a soul called to eternity
Forgoes the world and finds its destined star,
Upon his small, bright wings he rose and flew.[1]

Robert Frost [1875-] has written but ten sonnets, but every one of them is of a high order. What Amy Lowell wrote so acutely of his poetry in general is entirely applicable to his sonnets.

Mr. Frost writes down *exactly* what he sees. But, being a true poet, he sees it vividly, and with a charm which translates itself into a beautiful simplicity of expression. . . . He wins first by his gentle understanding, and his strong and unsentimental power of emotion; later we are conquered by his force, and moved to admiration by his almost unapproachable technique.[2]

ON A TREE FALLEN ACROSS A ROAD

The tree the tempest with a crash of wood
Throws down in front of us is not to bar
Our passage to our journey's end for good,
But just to ask us who we think we are,
Insisting always on our own way so.
She likes to halt us in our runner tracks,
And make us get down in a foot of snow

[1] "New York Times," Feb. 20, 1928.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Tendencies in Modern American Poetry," N. Y., 1917, p. 136.

Debating what to do without an axe.
And yet she knows obstruction is in vain:
We will not be put off the final goal;
We have it hidden in us to attain,
Not though we have to seize earth by the pole,
And, tired of aimless circling in one place,
Steer straight off after something into space.[1]

THE VANTAGE POINT

If tired of trees I seek again mankind,
Well I know where to hie me—in the dawn,
To a slope where the cattle keep the lawn.
There amid lolling juniper reclined,
Myself unseen, I see in white defined
Far off the homes of men, and farther still,
The graves of men on an opposing hill,
Living or dead, whichever are to mind.
And if by noon I have too much of these,
I have but to turn on my arm, and lo,
The sun-burned hillside sets my face aglow,
My breathing shakes the bluet like a breeze,
I smell the earth, I smell the bruisèd plant,
I look into the crater of the ant.[2]

Percy Mackaye [1875-] has thirty-three sonnets in his *Collected Poems,* 1916. All but four are Italian in form. With a few exceptions, they are occasional or complimentary in nature.

Joel Spingarn [1875-] has written at least two sonnets.

William Ellery Leonard [1876-] has, in the opinion of the author of this study, written, in *Two Lives,* one of the most powerful successions of sonnets in our literature. Ludwig Lewisohn writes of this narrative poem:

[1] "New Hampshire," New York, 1923, p. 109.
[2] "A Boy's Will," New York, 1915, p. 35.
These two sonnets are reprinted by special permission of, and arrangements with, Henry Holt and Company.

It solves the poetic problem of the age: the recounting of the exact fates of modern men and women in terms at once analytic and creative, epical and lyrical, precise and yet heroic. . . . Mr. Leonard uses the sonnet as a stanza. He has thus far more speed than Meredith could get out of his caudated sonnets. . . . But what counts in a work of this kind is less the story than the implicit and philosophic comment in the story, the sweep and passion of the verse, the treatment of landscape as part of the homely or homeless universe, the final towering of the story into the universal world of significant human fate.[1]

Mr. Leonard has this himself to say on this poem:

The austere form itself, the sonnet, (if in any organic creation, whether oak-tree or poem, one can separate "form itself" from essence, meaning, end) grew inevitably out of the need, an absolute need, of an especially austere control, masterful and unrelenting, over especially intense and fierce emotional experience, while a certain freedom resulted from variations within the norm (rime-arrangement, management of the 'turn,' etc.), and from linking the sonnets as stanzas (both in narrative progress and in end-enjambments). *Two Lives* is *not* a sonnet sequence.[2]

In addition to this series, Mr. Leonard has written many other sonnets on a wide range of themes, and in regular and irregular forms. In all, he has written two hundred and ninety-seven sonnets.

Four sonnets from TWO LIVES

We act in crises not as one who dons
A judge's robe and sits in praise or blame
With walnut gavel, before high window-frame,
Beside a Justice-and-her-scales in bronze;
We act in crises not by pros and cons
Of volumes in brown calfskin still the same;
But like the birds and beasts from which we came,
By the long trend of character—the fons,
Fons et origo—fountainhead and source—
Of deeper conduct, whether in unleashed hound
That tears the fleeting stag unto the ground,

[1] "The Nation," July 6, 1923.
[2] "The Locomotive-God," New York, 1927, p. 339.

Or thrush in battle for its fledgeling's corse,
Or boy that sees the cracked dam, hears a sound,
And down the peopled valley spurs his horse.

The Cosmic Rhythms have old right of way,
And roll through man as through the heaving sea:
Should the moon stop above us just for me
Because I neared the Valley of Death that day?
Should the Great Mother mercifully delay,—
As satiate with ten million women's pine,—
Delay her workings on this one of mine,
Because my wife in grief, in madness lay,
Already stricken?—Onward still and on
The Cosmic Rhythms roll; I've felt, I've thought,
And I have mated man and star and sun
As of one pulse, one breath, one being wrought,
With gain and loss alike of sun, man, star—
Because, ('tis all we know), because they are.

Death hath two hands to slay with: with the one
He stabs the loveliness of yesterday,
Till all its gold and blue is sodden gray
To memory forever, in the sun:
Think ye I think upon our earliest kiss,
Our walks, our vines, our readings, as I would
Were she still by me in her womanhood
To join in tender talk on all of this?
Death hath two hands to slay with: with the other
He stabs the glory of our bright Tomorrow—
Our best reality, our younger brother,
Our spirit-self—upon the fields of sorrow:
Think ye he took no unbuilt house from me,
No unsailed voyage with her across the sea?

That once the gentle mind of my dead wife
Did love the fiery Roman (dead like her)—
Lucretius and his vast hexameter—
I number with the ironies of life.
That I, who turned his Latin verse to mine
For her, the while she typed each page for me,
Should in my English, just have reached that line
Fourth from the end of the Book of Death (Book Three),

When Death rode out for her—was that design?—
If so, of God or Devil?—the line which saith,
"O Mors Æterna—O eternal Death"—
The last, last letters she fingered key by key! . . .
But when, long after, I had wrought the rest,
I said these verses, walking down the West.[1]

Charles Hanson Towne [1877-] has written twenty sonnets.

The untimely death of Arthur Upson [1877-1908] deprived America of one of her most promising poets. He has been grouped, along with Thomas S. Jones, Jr., and James Lane Allen, as representatives in America of the pre-Raphaelite movement. Certain it is that the two sonnets reprinted here are not alone in merit in a collection of forty-three completed before the author had reached his thirty-second birthday.

EX LIBRIS

In an old book at even as I read
Fast fading words adown my shadowy page,
I crossed a tale of how, in other age,
At Arqua, with his books around him, sped
The word to Petrarch; and with noble head
Bowed gently o'er his volumes that sweet sage
To Silence paid his willing seigniorage.
And they who found him whispered, "He is dead!"
Thus timely from old comradeships would I
To Silence also rise. Let there be night,
Stillness, and only these staid watchers by,
And no light shine save my low study light—
Lest of his kind intent some human cry
Interpret not the Messenger aright.

[1] From "Two Lives" (pp. 21, 63, 74, 106), by William Ellery Leonard, New York: The Viking Press, Inc., Copyright 1922 and 1925 by B. W. Huebsch, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publisher.

SOUVENANCE DE LIEGE

Grey city by the silver Meuse, I fling
One precious day to thee of my brief days;
Take it, and give remembrance: Mellow praise
Of chimes across a moonlight evening.
Rain of light echoes; the full, wavy swing
Of burdened barges down thy waterways—
Noise nearest music; the blue holy haze
And perfume of old altars; wing on wing
Of iridescent doves descending soft
Within a Gothic gate where one strews bread
For alms to the air's beggars; beyond her,
Arcades recessive, pinnacles aloft,
November's vista deepening to one blur
Of blue-and-grey behind her upturned head.[1]

Amelia Josephine Burr [1878-] has written at least nine sonnets.

IN DEEP PLACES

I love thee, Dear; and knowing my own heart,
With every beat I give God thanks for this.
I love thee only for the self thou art.
No wild embrace, no wisdom-shaking kiss,
No passionate pleading of a heart laid bare,
No urgent cry of love's extremity—
Strong traps to take the spirit unaware!
Not one of these I ever had of thee.
Neither of passion nor of pity wrought
Is this, the love to which at last I yield,
But shapen in the stillness of my thought,
And by a birth of agony revealed.
This is a thing to live while we do live,
That honors thee to take, and me to give.[2]

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[1] "Collected Poems," Minneapolis, 1909, Vol. I, p. 106 and Vol. II, p. 107.

Permission to quote these two sonnets granted by Mr. William C. Edgar, The Upson Memorial Committee, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[2] "Selected Lyrics," N. Y., 1927, p. 23.

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Grace Hazard Conkling [1878-] has written at least thirty-nine sonnets.

Donald Robert Perry Marquis (Don Marquis) [1878-] has used the sonnet in an ultra-colloquial form to portray his so-called "savage portraits," thirty-seven in all.

James Branch Cabell [1879-] has written but one sonnet.

John Erskine [1879-] has written thirty sonnets, mostly occasional in nature. One of the best is reprinted here.

AT THE FRONT—III

If this world be a stage, what hours we give
To tedious make-up in the tiring room;
How simply comes at last our cue to live,
How, ere we know it, we enact our doom!
The wisdom that impels us to the play
Is patient with us while we choose our parts,
But without warning sounds our judgment day;
The curtain rises—life, the drama, starts.
How late it starts! Ere this grim curtain rose,
How long we practiced attitude and pose.
Disguise of accent, costume, mood, or mind!
Yet in this inventory of our art,
Living at last, we play our naked heart;
How brief a reckoning counts us with our kind.[1]

William Brian Hooker [1880-] has fourteen sonnets in his *Collected Poems.*

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[1] "Collected Poems," N. Y., 1922, p. 121.

Reprinted by special permission of the author, and of the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, Indiana.

ARS LONGA

Not Thy great gifts, O God! I would not be
The prophet honored in an alien clime;
Or send my name trumpeting down through time,
Selling my manhood for a memory.
So should I fade into the shows of me:—
My joy become the reason for a rhyme,
My pain, a figure in the pantomime,
My love, a light over an unknown sea.
Give me but what Thou givest all mankind:
A little faith in what I labor for,
A friend whose name I daily think to bless,
A woman in whose eyes I seek and find,
Children mysteriously mine,—no more
Than common, ordinary happiness.[1]

Witter Bynner [1881-]has written thirteen sonnets of great power, and of a peculiarly rugged diction.

IN A RIVER TOWN

(To Edwin Arlington Robinson)

Brave listener to the melodious heart,
Its broken rhythms, its beating in the night,
Accurate scribe, the figures of whose art
Substract, divide, add, multiply aright;
We who came after, reverent and wise,
Went visiting your river-town and you,
And, haunted by the quiet of your eyes,
Yet saw them beautiful and found them true. . . .
And now, when ecstacies of youth subside,
And shadows darken the importunate will,
And neighbors are away and friends have died,
We learn compassion on your evening hill,
And, by forgiving, are ourselves forgiven,
Near an old apple-tree petalled with heaven.[2]

[1] "Poems," New Haven, Conn., 1915, p. 79.
Reprinted by special permission of the author and of The Yale University Press.
[2] "A Canticle of Pan," New York, 1920, p. 139.

OUT OF PEKING

Elaborate procession! Some one dead,
The red insignia topping many a pole,
Comes through an arch in China, charioted
By shuffling men, each with as much of soul
As haunted yesterday this body borne
Across the desert mounds out of Peking.
His hired mourners, ragged and forlorn,
But still alive, pass, with the wind of spring,
A fallen temple. And beyond the gate
I see the remnants of five broken gods,
Unroofed, untended now, grown desolate
And harsh with posturing mud and iron rods
And ends of straw. Am I as dead as they,
Or shall newer gods arise from this old clay?[1]

But one sonnet by John G. Neihardt [1881-] was obtainable.

Maxwell Struthers Burt [1882-] has written thirteen commendable sonnets.

RESURGAM

There is a wind that blows from earth when dusk is coming,
Laden with richness of the stored up day;
The secret warmth of hidden paths; the humming
Of pollened bees; the sweetness of damp hay;
And mist along a shining valley stream;
And cool reaches where the bending trees,
After the hot noon, listen for the breeze:
All this, I know, is part of your new dream.
And when I wake, and death seems most unfair,
Even then is some new mystery on the air,
Of scent, or sound, or loveliness of hue,
Stirring my heart and making me aware

[1] "Century Magazine," Vol. 105, p. 533.
These two sonnets are reprinted by special permission of the author.

I cannot grasp the rapture now of you,
Who were so close to dawn, and trees, and dew.[1]

Hermann Hagedorn [1882-] has written nine sonnets of a high order, two of which are reprinted here.

DOORS

Like a young child who to his mother's door
Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
And finds the door shut, and with troubled face,
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
A door that will not open, sick and numb,
I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.
Silence! And through the silence and the dark,
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing, hark!
Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.[2]

THE CABARET DANCER

Breathe not the word Tomorrow in her ears.
Tomorrow is for men who send their sails
Over the sea for gems and silken bales;
For dreamers, dawdlers, martyrs, pioneers,
Not for this leaf on the high bough that hears
Nor sound nor echo, prophesying gales—
Eyes of the swallow, dancing through the veils,
Heart of the swallow, knowing not the years.
Breathe not a word of beauty that shall fade;
Of lagging steps, of bare and lonely sorrow
On roads that other dancing feet have found

[1] "Songs and Portraits," New York, 1920, p. 4.
Reprinted by special permission of the author, and by special permission of, and arrangement with, Charles Scribner's Sons.
[2] "Poems and Ballads," New York, 1912, p. 26.

Beyond the hills where life with laughter played.
Breathe not a word of that grim land Tomorrow,
Lest she should quake to powder at the sound.[1]

Thomas S. Jones, Jr., [1882-] is a poet of rare delicacy. Every one of his one hundred and thirty-seven sonnets is well constructed, always in the Italian formula. Many are of exquisite conception and workmanship. He is often linked with his friend Arthur Upson as a poet of "mellowness and of golden clarity, as of golden light through stained glass." Especially noteworthy are his *Sonnets of the Cross* and *Sonnets of the Saints,* through which runs one dominant note,—a comparison of the pagan and the Christian conceptions of life.

TO SONG

Here shall remain all tears for lovely things,
And here enshrined the longing of great hearts,
Caught on a lyre whence waking wonder starts,
To mount afar upon immortal wings:
Here shall be treasured tender wonderings,
The faintest whisper that the soul imparts,
All silent secrets and all gracious arts
Where nature murmurs of her hidden springs.
O magic of a song! here loveliness
May sleep unhindered of life's mortal toll,
And noble things stand towering o'er the tide;
Here the years, untouched by time or stress,
Shall sweep on every wind that stirs the soul
The music of a voice that never died![2]

AVE ATQUE VALE
(In Memoriam—Arthur Upson)

I stood today upon time's border-land
And looked far off across each rolling year,
Yet scarcely their great thunder did I hear
Nor marked the wreckage of the changing sand;
For one soft note persuasive did command

[1] "Ladders Through the Blue," New York, 1925, p. 3.
These two sonnets are reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "The Voice in the Silence," Portland, Me., 1915, p. 3.

All other tones that reached my quickened ear,
And in that note a message low and clear
That I so plainly seemed to understand.
As in the saddened passing of fair things,
The sorrow of the sunset and the dawn,
For death that comes when life's hour least should fail—
Ever the moment's hush of lifted wings,
A gleam of wonder ere the flood is gone, . . .
The host uncovered from its mortal veil.[1]

RESURRECTION

The slender furrows turning green again,
Once held the simple hope that men found fair,
And old Egyptian builders, brown and bare,
Carved on the tomb a sheaf of ripened grain;
The ploughman sowing in the warm sweet rain,
While slow-paced oxen drew the gleaming share,
Saw lost Persephone rise golden there
And drive her flame-wheeled car across the plain.
In fruitful valley, high wheat-crested hill,
And vineyard where the purple pigeons start,
Life waked to light and faith in life was born;
But earth's long winter lingered on until
Within the tear-sown meadow of man's heart
Christ stood among the rows of ripened corn.[2]

THE BLESSING OF COLUMCILLE

Torqued warriors turned their galley's crimson prow
To hear a white monk hymn the Holy Three
In Derry's orchard vale beside the sea,
The light of peace upon his shining brow;
And angels, watching near the forest plough,
Saw Colum's blessing change the withered tree,
Cursed by the demon riders from the shee,
And bring the wild sweet apples to the bough.
Beneath his voice, clear as a ringing bell,
Dark kerns laid down their spear-shafts, then were still.

[1] "The Rose Jar," Portland, Me., 1915, p. 53.
[2] "Sonnets of the Cross," Portland, Me., 1927, p. 62.

And in each bitter heart the sweet fruit grew;
Dim oak woods, wakened from the Druid spell,
Shone white with wings; and on the sunset hill
The old gods listened, lonely in the dew.[1]

The thirteen sonnets of James Oppenheim [1882-] are of real merit, both in conception and in execution.

WAR AND LAUGHTER—IV

A perfect day draws to a perfect end:
The heavens are shining and the city lies
Against the sunset like a smiling friend.
Listening to talk that is both sweet and wise:
And in an easy revery in the park
The people, clean of toil, sprawl at their ease:
The day dissolves into the comforting dark:
Peace, O ye people, whispers Heaven, Peace!
Above old heads the silent skies are sown
With moon and stars: and girls are drawn to boys:
The hour is full of the faint but poignant tone
Of echoes of old loves, old dreams, old joys. . . .
Memory in her arms gathers all Life,
And love lays gentle hands on pain and strife.[2]

Max Eastman [1883-] has written sixteen occasional and complimentary sonnets.

Arthur Davison Ficke [1883-] is one of America's masters of the Shakespearean sonnet. His *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter,* intended, in the author's own words, "to tell a connected and gradually developing story," is a masterful sequence. Two of these sonnets are reprinted here. Mr. Ficke has written one hundred and forty-eight sonnets in all.

[1] "Sonnets of the Saints," Portland, Me., 1926, p. 11.
These four sonnets are reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "War and Laughter," New York, 1916, p. 116.
Reprinted by special permission of the author, and of The Century Company.

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS

I am in love with high far-seeing places
That look on plains half-sunlight and half-storm,—
In love with hours when from the circling faces
Veils pass, and laughing fellowship glows warm.
You who look on me with grave eyes where rapture
And April love of living burn confessed,—
The gods are good! The world lies free to capture!
Life has no walls. O take me to your breast!
Take me,—be with me for a moment's span!—
I am in love with all unveilèd faces.
I seek the wonder at the heart of man;
I would go up to the far-seeing places.
While youth is ours, turn toward me for a space
The marvel of your rapture-lighted face!

RUE DES VENTS

Since beauty holds no lease of settled date,
And youth has tenure but while roses blow,
And mortal hope must yield to mortal fate,
And every dream that comes must one day go—
Since these most lovely phantoms cannot be
Companions in the grey years that confess
Wild love to hold life's chiefest sovereignty,
Yet must without it seek for happiness—
Then let the autumn of the soul become
Transfigured with its own appropriate hues;
As in high pageant, when the flowers are dumb,
Old forests lift the splendor earth must lose,
And hills with solemn foliage of the fall
Outvaunt the spring, in phantom festival.[1]

Alfred Kreymborg [1883-] has written thirty-nine sonnets on various themes and in various forms.

Of the thirty-four sonnets of J. Corson Miller [1883-] read, this one seems the best.

[1] "Sonnets of a Portrait Painter," New York, 1922, pp. 13 and 75. Reprinted by special permission of the author.

VARIEGATION

Long had they known Love's dear, secluded night,
White days of honor, dreams and friendship's gold;
Star-windowed dusks and roses, words rubbed bright
Through loyal lips, home-lanes, and elms grown old.
They had worn laughter and the cooling noon
Of peace upon their brows; known youth's rich hours,
And all the heaped-up glory of the moon
That silvers coverlets for sleeping flowers.
Now this is past! borne out in tragic splendor,
War flung him far from her whose touch was tender;
And life to her is but a reeling rout,
With swimming tides of blood and battle shout.
Her days are dusty veils rent deep with weeping—
The Sea that loved him, too, has him in keeping.[1]

Only one sonnet by Fannie Stearns Davis [1884-] has come to the attention of the author.

Arthur Davison Ficke finds "fantastic brilliance" in the nineteen sonnets of Donald Evans [1884-1921].

LOVE IN PATAGONIA

Forgetting her mauve vows the Fania fled,
Taking away her moonlight scarves with her—
There was no joy left in the calendar,
And life was just an orchid that was dead.
Even our pious peacocks went unfed—
I had deserved no treachery like this,
For I had bitten sharp kiss after kiss
Devoutly, till her sleek young body bled.
Then Carlo came; he shone like a new sin—
Straightway I knew pearl-powder still was sweet,
And that my bleeding heart would not be scarred:

[1] "A Horn From Caerleon," New York, 1927, p. 31.

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I sought a shop where shoes were sold within,
And for two hundred francs made brave my feet,
And then I danced along the boulevard.[1]

Ezra Pound [1884-] has written at least two sonnets, one of which is reprinted here.

MASKS

These tales of old disguisings, are they not
Strange myths of souls that found themselves among
Unwonted folk that spake a hostile tongue,
Some soul from all the rest who'd not forgot
The star-span acres of a former lot,
Where boundless mid the clouds his course he swung,
Or carnate with his elder brothers sung
E'er ballad makers lisped of Camelot?
Old singers half-forgetful of their tunes,
Old painters colour-blind come back once more,
Old poets skilless in the wind-heart runes,
Old wizards lacking in their wonder-lore:
All they that with strange sadness in their eyes
Ponder in silence o'er earth's queynt devyse.[2]

Sara Teasdale [1884-] has written thirty-three delicate and thoughtful Italian sonnets.

TO A CASTILIAN SONG

We held the book together timidly,
Whose antique music in an alien tongue
Once rose among the dew-drenched vines that hung
Beneath a high Castilian balcony.
I felt the lute string's ancient ecstacy,
And while he read, my love-filled heart was stung,
And throbbed, as where an ardent bird has clung,

[1] "Sonnets from the Patagonian," New York, 1914, p. 11.
Reprinted by special permission of Frank-Maurice, Inc., Publishers.
[2] "Personae and Exultations," London, 1913, p. 31.
Reprinted by special permission of Elkin Matthews and Marrot, Ltd., London, Publishers.

The branches tremble on a blossomed tree.
Oh lady, for whose sake the song was made,
Laid long ago in some still cypress shade,
Divided from the man who longed for thee,
Here in a land whose name he never heard,
His song brought love as April brings the bird,
And not a breath divides my love from me.[1]

Eunice Tietjens [1884-] has written seventeen sonnets.

"The poetry of Gladys Cromwell [1885-1919]," wrote Padraic Colum, in his charming introduction to her posthumous *Poems,* "was that of an out-dweller on modern life. In it there are no mannerisms, no novelty . . . . Its balance dips towards thought rather than towards emotion . . . . She felt herself bound and laden, but like certain philosophical determinants, she knew herself free in meditation and introspection."

Miss Cromwell wrote twenty-three sonnets in all.

EXPERIENCE

There is no need for you to cheer or nerve
My spirit forward, for the days advise;
The years have counselled me. I recognize
No change from joy to sadness. I observe
No variation. Like the simple curve
Earth follows, meeting Spring and Winter skies,
My life is one experience, implies
Continuous truth. When it appears to swerve,
To mount from sadness into joy, or sink
To sadness with a wayward cruelty,
'Tis only so to you who watch. You think
That I must feel contrasting moods. You name
Them joy and pain. You have no skill to see
That where I stand all beauty is the same.

[1] "Rivers to the Sea," New York, 1915, p. 25.

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RENEWAL

Can this be love men yield me in return
For what I do? I hold a stange belief
That love is not a tribute, nor a leaf
Of laurel, nor a wage the soul can earn
By any kind of doing. The concern
Of love is need, and love is the spare sheaf
We glean from pain—the fruit of patient grief.
Can this be love men yield me? Nay. I spurn
Their recompense who could so long refrain
From giving. I myself will grant the gift
And prove what loving is. I'll finer sift
My sorrow, make new songs distilled from pain;
Above this hour of bitterness I'll lift
My spirit up and taste my grief again.[1]

Hortense Flexner [1885-] uses the Shakespearean form entirely in her seventeen sonnets.

POETS

Earth, you have had great lovers in your hour,
And little lovers, fearful and struck dumb;
Those who have seen you whole, as from a tower,
And others kneeling where the grass-blades come.
Age after spinning age and day by day,
They toss the dawn between them, as a ball,
Ride Beauty plunging to the whip of May,
And string the stars to light their carnival.
They will not heed the shouting, singing flood
Of lovers gone before them. Echoed cries,
Too like their own may sound, but their wild blood
Is out of hand at seas and moving skies.
The last to come will make his little tune,
And think it new—about the weary moon![2]

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[1] "Poems," N. Y., 1919, pp. 30 and 54.
These two sonnets are reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, The Macmillan Company.

[2] "Bookman," Vol. 56, p. 61.
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William Alexander Percy [1885-] has written nineteen sonnets.

Of the forty-four sonnets of Louis Untermeyer [1885-], the one reprinted here seems the best.

CHILD AND HER STATUE

Your living glass is this unpolished stone
That looks at you with unappraising eyes.
Only the smile is different. It is wise
As things inanimate are wise, from having grown
In fire and ice ten thousand years alone.
You will turn shrewd, change with the volatile skies,
Cheapen yourself, snatch at the moment's prize. . . .
Knowing all this, its smile remains its own.
Here where the light is almost leaping through,
The bust is real as you will never be.
You will grow harder than this marble, true
To nothing long, not even your effigy;
While all the impulsive radiance that was you,
Imprisoned in the stone, will still be free.[1]

The thirty-seven sonnets of William Rose Benét [1886-] are among his most effective work. They are predominantly Italian in form, and generally descriptive or reflective in nature.

LIGHTNING

Ere we be stricken blind to certain dreams,
Thank God there is a wild particular light
Flashes upon us from the relenting height
Of honest heaven! At such an hour, it seems
We gazed on patterned fields and shrunken streams
From our warm mountain, with the infinite
Royal about us, as the fabled, bright

[1] "Roast Leviathan," New York, 1923, p. 99.
Reprinted by special permission of the author, and of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Publishers.

Gods of Olympus scanned their Attic demes.
And then—cloud-shadows chilled us, and the sun
Was gone. Yet at the moment of my pain
A vivid sheet of lightning showed you clear
Against the eclipse. Lost? Aye, but rapt from one
Who laughed for immortal rapture of you, dear,
Through following thunder and the driving rain.[1]

Joyce Kilmer [1886-1918] wrote thirteen Italian sonnets, one of the best of which is reprinted here.

IN MEMORY OF RUPERT BROOKE

In alien earth, across a troubled sea,
His body lies, that was so fair and young.
His mouth is stopped, with half his songs unsung;
His arm is still, that struck to make men free.
But let no cloud of lamentation be
Where, on a warrior's grave, a lyre is hung.
We keep the echoes of his golden tongue;
We keep the vision of his chivalry.
So Israel's joy, the loveliest of kings,
Smote now the harp, and now the hostile horde.
Today the starry roof of Heaven rings
With psalms a soldier made to praise his Lord;
And David rests beneath Eternal wings,
Song on his lips, and in his hand a sword.[2]

The quiet dignity of the sonnets of David Morton [1886-] has given him a high rank among contemporary poets. Mr. Morton uses the Shakespearean form exclusively, only one of

[1] "Merchants from Cathay," New York, 1913, p. 16.
Reprinted by special permission of the author, and of The Century Company, Publishers.

[2] "Main Street and Other Poems," N. Y., 1917, p. 62.
Reprinted by special permission of Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.

the one hundred and seventy-eight sonnets read being in the Italian form.

COUNSEL

Let us be silent, now, and let us make
No more a mournful music of her going,
We should be quiet a little for the sake
Of one whose quiet, now, is past our knowing.
Let us remember only how the sound
Of all she said was like a string that played
Behind rude noises that had nearly drowned
The wisdom and the music that it made.
There will come hours of silence for us all,
Some midnights that will find us lonely men,
When round our hearts a high, strange hush will fall,
And in that silence, we may hear again
The grave and wise and quiet things she said,
And heed them closer, now that she is dead.[1]

WHO SHAPES THE CARVEN WORD?

Who shapes the carven word, the lean true line,
And builds with syllable and chiselled phrase,
To rear a sheltering temple and a shrine
For one white loveliness that lit his days,—
Must know that time wears words away like stone,
And blurs the sharpness of the clean, straight thought. . . .
A ghost will wander out and leave alone
And tenantless the temple that he wrought.
This will be ruins for another day,
Of lichen-bitten stone and empty tower,
A tumbled shrine whose god has moved away. . . .
Yet, later-comers, at some moon-hushed hour,
May find a strange light haunting through the shade,
And foot-prints that no mortal feet had made.[2]

[1] "Nocturnes and Autumnals," New York, 1928, p. 39.
[2] "Scribner's Magazine," Vol. LXXVIII (August, 1924), p. 226.

ALWAYS WHEN THERE IS MUSIC

Whenever there is music, it is you
Who come between me and the sound of strings:
The cloudy portals part to let you through,
Troubled and strange with long rememberings.
Your nearness gathers ghostlike down the room,
And through the pleading violins they play,
There drifts the dim and delicate perfume
That once was you, come dreamily astray.
Behind what thin and shadowy doors you wait
That such frail things as these should set you free!
When all my need, like armies at a gate,
Would storm in vain to bring you back to me;
When in this hush of strings you draw more near
Than any sound of music that I hear.[1]

IMMORTALIS

All loved and lovely women dear to rhyme:
Thais, Cassandra, Helen, and their fames,
Burn like tall candles through forgotten time,
Lighting the Past's dim arras with their names.
Around their faces wars the eager dark
Wherein all other lights are sunken now,
Yet, casting back, the seeker still may mark
A flame of hair, a bright immortal brow.
Surely, where they have passed, one after one,
Wearing their radiance to the darkened room,—
Surely, newcomers to Oblivion,
May still descry in that all-quenching gloom,
Rare faces lovely, lifted and alight,
Like tapers burning through the windy night.[2]

Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer [1886-] writes that he has written but one sonnet, the one reprinted here.

[1] "Century Magazine," Vol. CVIII (July, 1924), p. 294.
[2] "Ships in Harbour," New York, 1924, p. 14.
These four sonnets are reprinted by special permission of the author, and by special permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

THE HARVEST OF TIME

Time winnows beauty with a fiery wind,
Driving the dead chaff from the living grain.
Some day there will be golden sheaves to bind;
There will be wonder in the world again.
There will be lovely phrases born to power,
There will be words immortal and profound;
Though no man knows the coming of the hour,
And no man knows the sower of the ground.
It may be even now the ranging earth
Lifting to glory some forgotten land
Feels there deep beauty quickening to birth,
Sprung from the sowing of a hidden hand.
Beauty endures though towering empires die.
Oh, speed the blown chaff down the smoking sky.[1]

The thirty-six sonnets of John Hall Wheelock [1886-] have great power. Two of the best are reprinted here.

SONNET

I do not love to see your beauty fire
The light of eager love in every eye,
Nor the unconscious ardor of desire
Mantle a cheek when you are passing by;
When in the loud world's giddy thoroughfare
Your holy loveliness is noised about—
Lips that my love has prayed to—the gold hair
Where I have babbled all my secrets out—
Oh then I would I had you in my arms,
Desolate, lonely, broken, and forlorn,
Stripped of your splendor, spoiled of all your charm;
So that my love might prove her haughty scorn—
So I might catch you to my heart, and prove
'Tis not your beauty only that I love.[2]

[1] "The New Republic," Vol. 33, p. 288.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Dust and Light," New York, 1919, p. 61.

AFFIRMATION

How little our true majesty is shown
In these proud minds by which we are confessed
Traitors so often, recreants at best—
Unworthy of life's greatness and our own.
Not by the mind we shall be judged alone,
We are much more than in the mind is guessed.
By faith we live. The heart in every breast
Labors, believing, toward the end unknown.
Through the shrill mind, in terror and defeat,
The ancient flood of holy being roars;
The gallant heart again and yet again—
Jetting fierce streams of faith—with every beat,
In sacramental affirmation, pours
Life's answer through the unbelieving brain.[1]

The thirty-two sonnets of Elinor Wylie [1886?-1928] are as finely chiseled as any of her other poems.

THREE WISHES

Sink out of being, and go down, go down
Through the steep layers of emerald and jade
With warm thin skin of turquoise overlaid,
Where the slow coral spins a ghostly town
Of tower and minaret and fretted crown;
Give up your breath in sleep's subaqueous shade,
Hold to oblivion; are you afraid
Of cold deep death? Are you afraid to drown?
You have three flashing looks, like fairy wishes;
One burns your eyelids with a lightning-wink
Which turns into a rainbow world, and one
Shows sea birds brighter than the silver fishes,
And one—the last wild chance before you sink—
A flock of dancing clouds beneath the sun.[2]

[1] "The Bright Doom," New York, 1927, p. 74.
Reprinted by special permission of the author and of Charles Scribner's Sons.

[2] "Black Armour," New York, 1923, p. 14.
Reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Doubleday, Doran and Company.

Maxwell Anderson [1888-] has written at least nine sonnets, five of them, *Rain-Fugue*, forming a sequence of especial merit. Two of these five sonnets are reprinted here.

RAIN-FUGUE—II and IV

I must not love you now that you are dead,
Oh strong and sweet, gone back to earth and rain;
Why should you madden me in dreams again
With lips and eyes and hands and drooping head?
To you, adrift in sun-washed sea and air,
The old love-hunger matters not at all,
Nor texture of life, nor time's brief interval,
Nor sleep, nor sound, nor longing, nor despair.
But come yet once more out of the wind and night,
And the alien far unnumbered sands whereon
Your ashes may have sifted with salt seas,
Come as you loved me, lithe and warm and light—
Dischant me with farewell. And then begone—
That I may pass, forget, and be at ease.

When you were new-gone, I remember saying
All things go on the wind save one thing, grief.
Love and the lover, under time's long betraying,
Lose hold and fall with falling rain and leaf.
The tide stands but a moment at the flood
Before it turns, and you are lost to me,
Yet will this grief be bitter in my blood
While fire will burn or salt is in the sea.
Still is the sea salt in my mouth, and still
Fire burns my hand, but you who once were dear
Leave no more trace than sunset on a hill
Or the spent winds that blew across the year.
In from the sea and back to sea again:
Grief passes like a pathway under rain.[1]

The twenty-eight sonnets of John Crowe Ransom [1888-] are of exceptional merit, but illustrative of Bliss Perry's remark that a sonnet must not be asked to carry too heavy a burden of thought.

[1] "You Who Have Dreams," New York, 1925, pp. 25 and 26. Reprinted by special permission of the author.

NAY

With such strong arms I shut my love about,
She rested there, which was to me a token
This was a house she never could walk without,
Securely bricked, and never to be broken.
But no, the tight imprisonment was vain,
Too physical and wide to catch a heart;
When we had come most near, and scarce were twain
Some soul was still unmet, and much apart.
Therefore I knew the most unperjured lips
That ever sweetly bargained love's exchange
Must lie; love must be blacked with this eclipse,
That she and I could live, and still be strange!
And as for death, whose stroke dissevers men,
What fool would hope for firm possession then? [1]

The *Poems* of Alan Seeger [1888-1916] contain forty-four sonnets, most of them irregular, and on a wide diversity of theme.

SONNET

Why should you be astonished that my heart,
Plunged for so long in darkness and in dearth,
Should be revived by you, and stir and start
As by warm April now, reviving Earth?
I am the field of undulating grass,
And you the gentle perfumed breath of Spring,
And all my lyric being, when you pass,
Is bowed and filled with sudden murmuring.
I asked you nothing, and expected less,
But, with that deep, impassioned tenderness
Of one approaching what he most adores,
I only wished to lose a little space
All thought of my own life, and in its place
To live and dream and have my joy in yours.[2]

[1] "Chills and Fever," New York, 1924, p. 20.
Reprinted from "Chills and Fever" by John Crowe Ransom, by and with permission of, and special arrangement with, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

[2] "Poems," N. Y., 1925, p. 147.
Reprinted by special permission of, and arrangement with, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Clement Wood [1888-] has written, in *Eagle Sonnets,* one of the finest sonnet sequences in modern American literature. All of his ninety-two sonnets are in the Shakespearean form.

EAGLE SONNET—IV

I cannot know that other men exist:
It is but a belief, obscurely guessed.
Upon the mirror, brain, they move in mist;
A wall of air holds back the friendliest breast.
To me they are . . . . And so to me the vision
My fancy builds this moment in the air,
Food for a clearer glance's high derision,
Food for a thoughtful hour's thin despair.
For knowledge is from skill of inward seeing,
Not bred of eye, or ear, or touch alone:
It is the younger, truer name of being,
No gossip spread by careless flesh and bone;
And though from seed to fruit to seed it change,
It is one's self, and knows no further range.

EAGLE SONNET—XIV

That which made me was bred of ache and bleeding,
Of ageless agony that shrieked and tore:
And since all this has gone into the kneading,
My substance can endure a little more.
What if men labor for deceitful prizes,
Or if no prizes crown the thorny strife?
We know, beyond the last remote surmises,
That life itself is the reward of life.
We know each day goes deathward robed in splendor,
That night is deep and still and ever dear,
That men are warm in friendship, women tender,
And that their birth brings brimming harvest here:
A bright rebirth before the old soul perish,
An immortality to touch and cherish.[1]

Glenn Ward Dresbach [1889-] has written twenty-four Italian and thirty-seven English sonnets, mostly descriptive.

[1] "The Tide Comes In," New York, 1923, pp. 98 and 108. Reprinted by permission of the author.

David P. Berenberg [1890-] and Christopher Morley [1890-] have each written a few sonnets.

This sonnet by Harold Vinal [1891-] has a note suggestive of Masefield. Many others of his seventy-four sonnets are equally good.

OF MARINERS

Sea folk have speech that is not quite their own,
Twilight is in their talk and the sound of water,
For every sea wife, every sea wife's daughter,
Knows spars on ships and masts and the sea's moan.
Sea folk have speech that is not quite their own,
For wind is on them and the salty sun,
For every seaman, every seaman's son,
Knows sound of water running over stone.
Never a wind comes from the East again,
But they must speak of it to mate or friend,
Never a ship comes home in windy rain,
But they must tell it over without end.
Their salty speech is not their own at all,—
But sound of water falling by a wall![1]

Archibald MacLeish [1892-] has written twenty sonnets, generally well-constructed and in the Italian form.

In Edna St. Vincent Millay [1892-] we have one of the most competent of contemporary American sonneteers. A fine intellectuality and a genuine felicity of language characterize all her sonnets. In *Euclid Alone Has Looked on Beauty Bare,* Miss Millay has achieved one of the very best sonnets in our literature.

Of her sixty-eight sonnets, thirty are Italian, twenty-one English, and seventeen irregular in structure. In the main, they are reflective in theme.

[1] "White April," New Haven, 1922, p. 30.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.

SONNET

If I should learn, in some quite casual way,
That you were gone, not to return again—
Read from the back-page of a paper, say,
Held by a neighbor in a subway train,
How at the corner of this avenue
And such a street (so are the papers filled)
A hurrying man—who happened to be you—
At noon today had happened to be killed,
I should not cry aloud—I could not cry
Aloud, or wring my hands in such a place—
I should but watch the station lights rush by
With a more careful interest on my face,
Or raise my eyes and read with greater care
Where to store furs and how to treat the hair.[1]

SONNET

And you as well must die, beloved dust,
And all your beauty stand you in no stead;
This flawless, vital hand, this perfect head,
This body of flames and steel, before the gust
Of Death, or under his autumnal frost,
Shall be as any leaf, be no less dead
Than the first leaf that fell,—this wonder fled,
Altered, estranged, disintegrated, lost.
Nor shall my love avail you in your hour.
In spite of all my love, you will arise
Upon that day and wander down the air
Obscurely as the unattended flower,
It mattering not how beautiful you were,
Or how beloved above all else that dies.[2]

SONNET

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare

[1] "Renascence and Other Poems," published by Harper and Brothers, New York, 1921, p. 72. Copyright 1917 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.
[2] "Second April," published by Harper and Brothers, New York, 1921, p. 106. Copyright 1921 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.
O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized. Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.[1]

SONNET

Life, were thy pains as are the pains of hell,
So hardly to be borne, yet to be borne,
And all thy boughs more grim with wasp and thorn
Than armoured bough stood ever; too chill to spell
With the warm tongue, and sharp with broken shell
Thy ways, whereby in wincing haste forlorn
The desperate foot must travel, blind and torn,
Yet must I cry,—So be it; it is well.
So fair to me thy vineyards, nor less fair
Than the sweet heaven my fathers hoped to gain;
So bright this earthly blossom spiked with care,
This harvest hung behind the boughs of pain,
Needs must I gather, guessing by the stain,
I bleed, but know not wherefor, know not where.[2]

Maxwell Bodenheim [1893-] has written at least ten sonnets.

John Van Alstyn Weaver [1893-] has written sonnets which exemplify to a marked degree the "colloquiality" that

[1] "The Harp Weaver and Other Poems," published by Harper and Brothers, New York, 1923, p. 74. Copyright 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

[2] "The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems," published by Harper and Brothers, New York, 1928, p. 63. Copyright 1928 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

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seems peculiarly characteristic of the modern sonnet. This quite conservative one is, however, the best of the thirteen read, and far better than any of his doubtful attempts to write sonnets in the American vernacular.

PERHAPS

Perhaps it were far better not to know
Beauty. Perhaps one should not ever see
The moonlight shedding silver on a tree;
Or apple-bloom. Perhaps one should not go
Where Spring may thrust her little swords of green
Through strongest armor; nor small birchen leaves
Smould'ring to incense; nor receive the keen
Flicks of a breeze that stirs the new-bound sheaves.
Perhaps one should but guess how two may stand
Merging their spirits by the clasp of hand
In hand, while in their inmost hearts they hear
A far-off swooning music drawing near. . . .
Perhaps he is more fortunate who goes
Dreaming and wondering, and never knows.[1]

Conrad Aiken [1895-] has written nine sonnets in the English form.

Many of the twenty-two sonnets of Babette Deutsch [1895-] are of real power. They are prevailingly English in structure, and reflective or occasional in nature.

SOLITUDE

There is the loneliness of peopled places:
Streets roaring with their human flood; the crowd
That fills bright rooms with billowing sounds and faces,
Like foreign music, overshrill and loud.
There is the loneliness of one who stands
Fronting the waste under the cold sea-light,
A wisp of flesh against the endless sands,

[1] "More in American," New York, 1926, p. 100.
Reprinted by special permission of the author and of Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher.

Like a lost gull in solitary flight.
Single is all up-rising and down-lying;
Struggle or fear or silence none may share;
Each is alone in bearing and in dying;
Conquest is uncompanioned as despair.
Yet have I known no loneliness like this,
Locked in your arms, and bent beneath your kiss.[1]

This is one of the best of the thirty-seven sonnets of Robert Silliman Hillyer [1895-].

SONNET

Even as love grows more, I write thee less,
Impelled to speak, unable still to voice
The lyric thoughts like angels that rejoice,
Attendant on thy godly loveliness.
Stay the bright swallow high in airy poise,
Carve out of stone an infinite caress,
Garner the fruits and tears of happiness,
Make bloom forever what an hour destroys,
Then shamed by such unprecedented skill
I may find words to name thee, and to sing
Such praises of thy beauty as shall fill
The listening world with floods of carolling;
Till then thou art like starlight on the air,
Or clouds at dawn, unutterably fair.[2]

Thirteen of Muna Lee's [1895-] twenty-four sonnets form an arresting sequence, the fourth sonnet of which is reprinted here.

SONNET

I have a thousand pictures of the sea—
Snatches of song and things that travelers say.
I know its shimmering from green to gray,

[1] "Banners," N. Y., 1919, p. 65.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Sonnets and Other Lyrics," Cambridge, Mass., 1917, p. 24.
Reprinted by special permission of the author and of The Harvard University Press.

At dawn and sunset it is plain to me.
Like something known and loved for years will be
That sight of it when I shall come some day
Where little waves and great waves war and play,
And little winds and great winds fly out free.
Of love I had no pictures: love would come
Like any casual guest whom I could greet
Serenely, and serenely let depart—
Love, that came like fire and struck me dumb,
That came like wind and swept me from my feet,
That came like lightning shattering my heart.[1]

Helen Frazee-Bower [1896-] has written ten sonnets.

Joseph Auslander [1897-] is one of the most skillful of the younger sonneteers. His fifty-two sonnets are written in all forms and on all themes, although his best work is done in the reflective sonnet and in the Italian form.

SONNET

They said, "You have gathered driftwood all your years;
We cannot use you: we are moving fast
And doing things so different, so vast!"
This he remembered; now through hot blind tears,
He saw the sun rise like a thousand spears;
The slow tide sliding in; a single mast
Black on the sky: and he stood up and passed
Beyond the breakwater and the huddled weirs.
And on the beach the driftwood had been blown
Heaving with the tide and wind. And there
He kneeled . . . a sail swept by . . . he was alone.
A gull flashed white across the broad blue air . . .
They said, "You have gathered driftwood all your years . . ."
He groped among the driftwood, blind with tears.

[1] "Sea Change," New York, 1923, p. 53.

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DARK IRONY

This brilliant animal mirth and this too brief
Agility of sense in wrist and brain
Must perish in some moon of dripping leaf
And pass with the duck's wedge and the snarl of rain;
This hand that struck the violin or stroked
The flute to a fever and these brittle cells
Where God gripped Satan will be something choked
And chilled—a pinch of dust, a drift of bells.
What a dark irony that we who leap
Through solstices of song and sweat and groans
Must quit our beauty for a venial sleep
Which the sick buzzard sniffs at and disowns,
And end up spilling in a little heap
To beat at heaven by a door of bones.[1]

Stephen Vincent Benét [1898-] has written thirty-five sonnets, one of the best of which is reprinted here.

LONELY BURIAL

There were not many at that lonely place,
Where two scourged hills met in a little plain.
The wind cried loud in gusts, then low again.
Three pines strained darkly, runners in a race
Unseen by any. Toward the further woods
A dim harsh noise of voices rose and ceased.
We were most silent in those solitudes.
Then, sudden as a flame, the black-robed priest,
The clotted earth piled roughly up about
The hacked red oblong new-made thing,
Short words in swordlike Latin—and a rout
Of dreams most impotent, unwearying.
Then, like a blind door shut on a carouse,
The terrible bareness of the soul's last house.[2]

[1] "The Cyclops' Eye," N. Y., 1926, pp. 28 and 72.
These two sonnets are reprinted by special permission of the author, and by special permission of, and arrangement with, Harper and Brothers, Publishers.

[2] "Young Adventure," New Haven, 1918, p. 57.
Reprinted by special permission of the author, and of Doubleday, Doran and Company.

In a sonnet reprinted here, Léonie Adams [1899-] has written one of the best of recent sonnets. None of her other nine sonnets approaches this achievement.

A GULL GOES UP

Gulls when they fly move in a liquid arc,
Still head, and wings that bend above the breast,
Covering its glitter with a cloak of dark,
Gulls fly. So as at last toward balm and rest,
Remembering wings, the desperate leave their earth,
Bear from their earth what there was ruinous-crossed,
Peace from distress, and love from nothing-worth,
Fast at the heart, its jewels of dear cost.
Gulls go up hushed to that entrancing flight,
With never a feather of all the body stirred.
So in an air less rare than longing might
The dream of flying lift a marble bird.
Desire it is that flies; then wings are freight
That only bear the feathered heart no weight.[1]

* * * * * *

There remains to be considered a group of American sonnet writers, mostly contemporary, for whom no biographical information was obtainable. They will, therefore, be mentioned briefly in a purely alphabetical order.

This sonnet by Elsa Barker is of a high order.

WHEN I AM DEAD AND SISTER TO THE DUST

When I am dead and sister to the dust;
When no more avidly I drink the wine
Of human love; when the pale Proserpine
Has covered me with poppies, and cold rust
Has cut my lyre-strings, and the sun has thrust
Me underground to nourish the world-vine,
Men shall discover these old songs of mine,

[1] "Those Not Elect," New York, 1925, p. 5.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.

And say: This woman lived—as poets must!
This woman lived and wore life as a sword
To conquer wisdom; this dead woman read
In the sealed Book of Love and underscored
The meanings. Then the sails of faith she spread,
And faring out for regions unexplored,
Went singing down the River of the Dead.[1]

Countee Cullen is the author of at least twenty-eight sonnets.

Olive Tilford Dargan has, in *The Cycle's Rim, To One Drowned at Sea,* written an outstanding sequence of fifty-three Italian sonnets. In all, Mrs. Dargan has written sixty-eight sonnets.

THE CYCLE'S RIM
SONNET XLI

O what a lover must thou be, Old Time,
With so much beauty to thy bosom folded!
The queens that reigned o'er monarchies of rhyme,
And by new worship ever newly moulded:
With all the Helens of the lyreless Troys,
Sisters of Lama, Beatrice, Eloise,
Who shone on worshippers denied the voice
To set their name 'mong song's divinities!
And happy thou, my Dear, who now dost share
The secrets of Time's eyes. O, smile thou must,
As Pity smileth, seeing mortals here
Laying another song on Helen's dust.
But of thy joy I dream unjealously,
Knowing in all thy loves thou lovest me.[2]

TO MIRIMOND

Dost think that Time, to whom stars vainly sue,
Will for thy beauty keep one fixèd place?
Or that he may, o'er-weighed with seasons due
Forget one Spring where veinlet tendrils lace

[1] "Century Magazine," Vol. 71, p. 379.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "The Cycle's Rim," N. Y., 1916, p. 59.

Rose over rose to make this flower, thy face?
Look round thee now, dear dupe of sweet hey-day!
Of what once blooming joy canst thou find trace
Save in the bosom of a cold decay?
What violet of Summer's yester sway
Usurps these clouds to throne her slender moon?
Look on the wrinkling year, the shrunken way,
The wintry bier of all that gaudy shone,
And gather love ere loveliness wear pall,
If thou, when all is gone, wouldst still have all.[1]

Winifred Davidson is represented in several anthologies by a sequence of twelve sonnets.

This thoughtful sonnet is one of nine by Abbie Huston Evans.

HILL-BORN

Back to this mould, this matrix whence I came,
I come again.—Like solder where it spills,
My being hardened in among these hills
When God took off my metal from the flame
And poured me out like silver: presently,
My outline fixed forever, I was I,
Stamped by this rocky corner like a die,
Shaped by these five hills and this edge of sea.
Oh, strange how hills and man's heart interlock
Inveterately—how rock can bestow
Its contour on his spirit quick within!
Yet so it is: Hill-men have always been
Like nuggets fashioned by their chinks, or snow
Packed in the star-like crevice of a rock.[2]

Mary McNeil Fenollosa has written at least four sonnets.

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[1] "The Path Flowers and Other Poems," N. Y., 1914, p. 62.
These two sonnets are reprinted by special permission of the author.
[2] "Outcrop," New York, 1928, p. 13.
Reprinted by special permission of the author.

Agnes Lee has thirteen Italian sonnets in *The Border of the Lake.*

This single sonnet by Anne O'Hare McCormick is well worth reprinting.

NO ONE SEES BEAUTY

So many times have I made testaments;
So many times have said farewell to the sun;
Brightened with tears the magic color spun
Upon the looms of spring; borne the last scents
Of clover fields beneath the dripping tents
Of summer clouds; turned sadly one by one
From roads and hills that beckon, seas that run
With my doomed dreams to far, lost continents.
No one sees beauty who has not seen death.
I know how dear is dust, how soft is rain,
How warm the grass, how deep the starry skies.
I know, who pay for loveliness with pain,
That earth is fairest fading from the eyes,
And life tastes sweeter with each faltering breath.[1]

Angela Morgan, Lola Ridge and Jean Starr Untermeyer have written, and are writing, sonnets.

Jessie B. Rittenhouse has written but one and Margaret Widdemer but two sonnets, according to letters to the author.

[1] "The New Republic," Vol. 31, p. 335.
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TABLE I

This table indicates the contribution of each of the two hundred and three writers considered in this thesis to the four large classes of sonnets herein recognized, i e., Italian, English, Compromise, and Other Forms.

The authors are arranged alphabetically.

Name	*Italian*	*English*	*Compromise*	*Other Forms*	*Total*
Adams, Léonie		7	3		10
Aiken, Conrad		9			9
Albee, John	3		1	2	6
Alcott, Amos Bronson		8		38	46
Aldis, Mary		7			7
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey	28	1	1	1	31
Allston, Washington				13	13
Anderson, Maxwell		7	1	1	9
Auslander, Joseph	36	8	1	7	52
Baker, Julie Wetherill	1				1
Barker, Elsa	26				26
Bates, Arlo	28				28
Bates, Katherine Lee	60			1	61
Bayley, Peter	14			2	16
Beers, Henry Augustine	3			1	4
Benét, Stephen Vincent	9	10	9	7	35
Benét, William Rose	30		2	5	37
Benjamin, Park			4	17	21
Bensel, James Berry	10				10
Berenberg, David P.	5	1			6
Bethune, George Washington	2			2	4
Bigelow, Melville Madison	2				2
Bird, Robert Montgomery	1				1
"Birtha"				1	1
Bodenheim, Maxwell	3		7		10
Boker, George Henry	371			18	389
Branch, Anna Hempstead	24	2	10	16	52
Brooks, Phillips	1		10	2	13
Bryant, William Cullen	1	2	3	3	9
Bunner, Henry Cuyler	10				10

Name	*Italian*	*English*	*Compromise*	*Other Forms*	*Total*
Burr, Amelia Josephine		5	2	2	9
Burt, Maxwell Struthers	2	2	2	7	13
Burton, Richard	19	1			20
Bynner, Witter	7	4	1	1	13
Cabell, James Branch			1		1
Cather, Willa	3	3		1	7
Cawein, Madison	72	1	2	4	79
Chadwick, John White	23	2	4	3	32
Channing, William Ellery, 2nd	9		2		11
Chivers, Thomas Holley		3		6	9
Coates, Florence Earle	37		2	1	40
Cone, Helen Gray	17	5	3		25
Conkling, Grace Hazard	33		2	4	39
Cornwell, Henry Sylvester	2		1	14	17
Cranch, Christopher Pearse	9	5	9	5	28
Crandall, Charles Henry	12				12
Cromwell, Gladys	22			1	23
Cullen, Countee	7	16	1	4	28
Cummings, Ernest E.	4	6		7	17
Cushman, Charlotte				2	2
Dana, Richard Henry			1		1
Dargan, Olive Tilford	5	60		3	68
Davidson, Winifred	12				12
Davis, Fannie Stearns				1	1
Davis, Richard Bingham			1	2	3
Deutsch, Babette	3	15	4		22
Dinsmore, Julia Stockton	66	1		1	68
Dodge, Mary Mapes	4			1	5
Drake, Joseph Rodman				1	1
Dresbach, Glenn Ward	24	37			61
Driscoll, Louise	3				3
Eastman, Max	5		2	9	16
Egan, Maurice Francis	36	1		6	43
Embury, Emma Catherine	3	2	12	7	24
Erskine, John	2	4	3	21	30
Evans, Abbie Huston		8		1	9
Evans, Donald	3		14	2	19
Fawcett, Edgar	44				44

Name	*Italian*	*English*	*Com-promise*	*Other Forms*	*Total*
Fenollosa, Mary McNeil	2			2	4
Ficke, Arthur Davison	4	119	4	21	148
Fisher, Mahlon Leonard			50		50
Flexner, Hortense		17			17
Frazee-Bower, Helen		10			10
Frost, Robert	3	2	4	1	10
Fuller, Margaret (Ossoli)		1	3	4	8
Garrison, Theodosia	13	1	1	2	17
Garrison, William Lloyd	22	10	2	3	37
Gibson, William	12	1		1	14
Gilder, Richard Watson	67	20	4	5	96
Guiney, Louise Imogen	46				46
Guiterman, Arthur		1			1
Hagedorn, Hermann	8		1		9
Hale, Sarah Josepha				5	5
Hay, John	20			2	22
Hayne, Paul Hamilton	66	3	8	21	98
Hazard, Caroline	92				92
Higginson, Thos. Wentworth	20	1			21
Hill, George				15	15
Hillyer, Robert Silliman	3		1	33	37
Holmes, Oliver Wendell	9			2	11
Hooker, William Brian	14				14
Hovey, Richard	27	15	1		43
Humphreys, David				12	12
Jackson, Helen Hunt	84			1	85
Jewett, Sophie	14				14
Johnson, Robert Underwood	18	1			19
Jones, Thomas S., Jr.	135	2			137
Kilmer, Joyce	13				13
Kinney, Elizabeth A.	12			43	55
Kreymborg, Alfred	8	17	2	12	39
Lanier, Sidney	16	11		1	28
Larcom, Lucy	3			8	11
Lathrop, George Parsons	4				4
Lawson, James				5	5
Lazarus, Emma	5	4	17	7	33
Lee, Agnes	13				13

Name	*Italian*	*English*	*Com-promise*	*Other Forms*	*Total*
Lee, Muna	24				24
Leonard, William Ellery	103	11	78	105	297
Lodge, George Cabot	96		13	55	164
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth	62				62
Low, Samuel		7	1	14	22
Lowell, Amy	41				41
Lowell, James Russell	36	6	12	3	57
Lowell, Maria White			4		4
Lynch, Anne C.			3	12	15
Mackaye, Percy	29	3	1		33
MacLeish, Archibald	14	1	2	3	20
Markham, Charles Edwin	12		3	6	21
Marquis, Donald Robert	34	3			37
McCormick, Anne O'Hare	1				1
Mifflin, Lloyd	478		4	34	516
Millay, Edna St. Vincent	30	21		17	68
Miller, J. Corson	17	2	1	14	34
Mitchell, Langdon Elwyn	1	10		12	23
Mitchell, Silas Weir	2		2	4	8
Monroe, Harriet	19		1	1	21
Moody, William Vaughn				1	1
Moore, Charles Leonard		100			100
Morgan, Angela	2	3	1		6
Morley, Christopher	3	5	1	1	10
Morton, David	1	177			178
Moulton, Louise Chandler	122				122
Neihardt, John G.	1				1
Oppenheim, James		12	1		13
Paine, Robert Treat		4		2	6
Parker, Theodore		4		5	9
Parsons, Thomas William	2			8	10
Peabody, Josephine Preston	15				15
Percival, James Gates	3		4	18	25
Percy, William Alexander	3	15		1	19
Piatt, John James	5		1	5	11
Pickering, Henry	12	2	2		16
Poe, Edgar Allan		2		3	5
Portfolio Sonnets	3	12	2	12	29

Name	*Italian*	*English*	*Compromise*	*Other Forms*	*Total*
Pound, Ezra	1			1	2
Preston, Margaret Junkin	8			2	10
Pulsifer, Harold Trowbridge		1			1
Ransom, John Crowe	20	3		5	28
Read, Thomas Buchanan		1		4	5
Reese, Lizette Woodworth	12	8	56	3	79
Ridge, Lola	1		4	8	13
Riley, James Whitcomb	14				14
Rittenhouse, Jessie B.	1				1
Robinson, Edwin Arlington	77	1	3	8	89
Sampson, Henry Aylett	36				36
Santayana, George	61				61
Saxe, John Godfrey	3	5	10	5	23
Scollard, Clinton	67				67
Seeger, Alan	5	6	19	14	44
Sherman, Frank Dempster	18				18
Shivell, Paul	22	7			29
Sigourney, Lydia Huntley		1			1
Sill, Edward Rowland	7		1	2	10
Simms, William Gilmore		5	12	44	61
Smith, Elizabeth Oakes	4	12	1	20	37
Speyer, Leonora	5		1	2	8
Spingarn, Joel	1			1	2
Stanton, Frank L.	7				7
Stedman, Edmund Clarence	6			2	8
Sterling, George	226				226
Stoddard, Richard Henry	5	4		2	11
Swift, Elizabeth S.		2			2
Taylor, James Bayard	6		3	2	11
Teasdale, Sara	26		2	5	33
Thaxter, Celia Laighton		9		4	13
Thomas, Edith Matilda	140	3			143
Tietjens, Eunice	4	13			17
Timrod, Henry	1		2	12	15
Towne, Charles Hanson	19		1		20
Tuckerman, Frederick Goddard				70	70
Tuckerman, Henry Theodore		29			29
Tyler, Royall			1	1	2

Name	*Italian*	*English*	*Compromise*	*Other Forms*	*Total*
Untermeyer, Jean Starr	2		1	1	4
Untermeyer, Louis	37		3	4	44
Upson, Arthur	39	4			43
Van Dyke, Henry	29		2	1	32
Very, Jones		107			107
Vinal, Harold	3	38	16	17	74
Weaver, John Van Alstyn		2	7	4	13
Weeks, Robert Kelley	4	2		8	14
Wharton, Edith	17				17
Wheelock, John Hall	33	3			36
White, Richard Grant			1		1
Whitman, Sarah Helen Powers		8		5	13
Whittier, John Greenleaf			16	7	23
Widdemer, Margaret	2				2
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler	6	23		1	30
Wilde, Richard Henry				2	2
Willis, Nathaniel Parker		1		3	4
Winter, William			1	6	7
Wood, Clement		92			92
Woodberry, George	91	2			93
Wylie, Elinor	28		2	2	32

TABLE II

This table shows in detail the forms used by a limited number of American sonnet writers. All writers of fifty sonnets or more are included in this detailed analysis. In addition, a number of poets are included because of their importance in American literature, regardless of the number of their sonnets. Such men, for example, are Bryant, Poe, and Frost, with but nine, five, and ten sonnets respectively.

The sonnets forms included in this analysis are the same as those found in Tables VI, VII, and VIII, and are all the forms used frequently enough in our literature to justify their inclusion in this study. The various Italian and Compromise forms are arranged in the order of the frequency of their use.

	ITALIAN																ENGLISH	COMPROMISE								IRR.	TOTAL
	ABBA ABBA CDECDE	ABBA ABBA CDCDCD	ABBA ABBA CDCDEE	ABBA ABBA CDDCCD	ABBA ABBA CDDCDC	ABBA ABBA CDCDDC	ABBA ABBA CDCEDE	ABBA ABBA CDCEED	ABBA ABBA CDDCEE	ABBA ABBA CDEDCE	ABBA ABBA CCDEED	ABBA ABBA CDECED	ABBA ABBA CCDEDE	ABBA ABBA CDDECE	OTHER SESTETS	ABAB CDCD EFEFGG	ABBA CDDC EFFEGG	ABBA ACCA DEEDFF	ABBA CDDC EFGEFG	ABBA CDDC EFEFGG	ABBA ACCA DEFDEF	ABBA ACCA DEDEFF	ABAB CDCD EFGEFG	ABBA ACCA DEDEDE	FORMS NOT INCLUDED IN PRECEDING GROUPS	
Aldrich, Thomas B.	17	5	3			1				1			1			1					1				1	31
Auslander, Joseph		10	14			5			7							8			1						7	52
Bates, Katherine L.	13	6	3	1		3	5	7		2	1	1	1		17										1	61
Boker, George H.	1	81		132	116	21									20										18	389
Branch, Anna H.	9	7			1	2			3			1			1	2	2	2		3		3			16	52
Bryant, Wm. Cullen		1														2	3								3	9
Cawein, Madison	50	3	7		1		1		2	3		3			2	1			1		1				4	79
Dargan, Olive T.	2		1				1					1				60									3	68
Dinsmore, Julia S.	29	5	6		1	2		1	6			2			14	1									1	68
Dresbach, Glenn W.	23	1														37										61
Ficke, Arthur D.	1	3														119	1		2	1					21	148
Fisher, Mahlon L.																		50								50
Frost, Robert		2									1					2	3	1							1	10
Gilder, Richard W.	13	27	9	1			2		2	4		1			8	20	1		2				1		5	96
Guiney, Louise I.	10	8			5		3			3	3	1	1	2	10											46
Hayne, Paul H.	8	1	2		1	3	8	5	1	13		6		4	14	3			2	4	1			1	21	98
Hazard, Caroline								92																		92
Holmes, Oliver W.				5	2	2																			2	11
Jackson, Helen H.	1	4	13	13	3	6			1			1	6	2	34										1	85
Jones, Thomas S.	122	6	5						2							2										137
Kinney, Eliz. A.		1	1												10										43	55
Lanier, Sidney	2	1	5										1		7	11									1	28
Leonard, Wm. Ellery	29	36	10		5				1		2	1	2	1	16	11	2	11	5	12	15	23	2	8	105	297
Lodge, Geo. Cabot	26	2	1	2	1	2	26	7		2	9	2	6	5	5						11		1	1	55	164
Longfellow, Henry W.	51	8	1						1		1															62

	ITALIAN																	ENGLISH	COMPROMISE								IRR.	TOTAL
	ABBA ABBA CDECDE	ABBA ABBA CDCDCD	ABBA ABBA CDCDEE	ABBA ABBA CDDCCD	ABBA ABBA CDDCDC	ABBA ABBA CDCDDC	ABBA ABBA CDCEDE	ABBA ABBA CDCEED	ABBA ABBA CDDCEE	ABBA ABBA CDEDCE	ABBA ABBA CCDEED	ABBA ABBA CDECED	ABBA ABBA CCDEDE	ABBA ABBA CDDECE	OTHER ABBA SESTETS	ABAB CDCD EFEFGG	ABBA CDDC EFFEGG	ABBA ACCA DEEDFF	ABBA CDDC EFGEFG	ABBA CDDC EFEFGG	ABBA ACCA DEFDEF	ABBA ACCA DEDEFF	ABAB CDCD EFGEFG	ABBA ACCA DEDEDE	FORMS NOT INCLUDED IN PRECEDING GROUPS	
Lowell, Amy	14	12	10			1	1		1	1		1													3	41
Lowell, James R.	5	25	1			1	1		1			1			1	6					1	6		5	3	57
Mifflin, Lloyd	88	50	3	44	37	38	27	7	1	52	1	49	3	12	66						1			3	34	516
Millay, Edna St. V.	4	13	1		1			1		1	1	3		1	4	21									17	68
Moore, Charles L.																100										100
Morton, David			1													177										178
Moulton, Louise C.	39	32	20	6	5	5		1	3	1	1		1	1	7											122
Poe, Edgar A.																2									3	5
Reese, Lizette W.	11	1														8	2		28	4	8		13	1	3	79
Robinson, Edwin A.	23	7	1	2	3	4	3	11	1		9		2	5	6	1					1		1	1	8	89
Santayana, George	1	13	5	1	7	1	4		1		2			1	25											61
Scollard, Clinton	30	12		2					2	7	7		1	1	5											67
Simms, Wm. Gilmore																5	9			3					44	61
Sterling, George	114	2	1				51		2	3	24	1	22	6												226
Taylor, J. Bayard	2	3										1					1	1		1					2	11
Teasdale, Sara	3	2	1	3	1		4		2		1	1		2	6				1	1					5	33
Thomas, Edith M.	35	53	3	23	7	1	1	2	1	3		3		1	7	3										143
Tuckerman, F. G.																									70	70
Very, Jones																107										107
Vinal, Harold		1	1		1											38	7			6			3		17	74
Whittier, John G.																	16								7	23
Wood, Clement																92										92
Woodberry, George	16	65	5		1		2								2	2										93
Wylie, Elinor	4	1	1	1					15		1			3	2		1			1					2	32

TABLE III

This table is based on the same forty-nine writers whose sonnet forms are analyzed in the preceding table. For each author there is given the total *number* of sonnets written in all forms, and the *percentage* of that number in each of the four main classes of sonnets.

	Total Sonnets	*Percentage Italian*	*Percentage English*	*Percentage Compromise*	*Percentage Other Forms*
Aldrich, T. B.	31	91	3	3	3
Auslander, Joseph	52	69	15	1	15
Bates, Katherine L.	61	98	—	—	2
Boker, George H.	389	95	—	—	5
Branch, Anna H.	52	46	4	19	31
Bryant, William C.	9	12	22	33	33
Cawein, Madison	79	91	1	3	5
Dargan, Olive T.	68	7	88	—	5
Dinsmore, Julia	68	98	1	—	1
Dresbach, Glenn W.	61	39	61	—	—
Ficke, Arthur D.	148	3	80	3	14
Fisher, Mahlon L.	50	—	—	100	—
Frost, Robert	10	30	20	40	10
Gilder, Richard W.	96	70	21	4	5
Guiney, Louise I.	46	100	—	—	—
Hayne, Paul H.	98	67	4	8	21
Hazard, Grace C.	92	100	—	—	—
Holmes, Oliver W.	11	82	—	—	18
Jackson, Helen H.	85	99	—	—	1
Jones, Thomas S.	137	99	1	—	—
Kinney, Elizabeth	55	12	—	—	88
Lanier, Sidney	28	57	39	—	4
Leonard, William E.	297	35	4	26	35
Lodge, George C.	164	59	—	7	34
Longfellow, Henry W.	62	100	—	—	—
Lowell, Amy	41	100	—	—	—
Lowell, James R.	57	63	11	21	5
Mifflin, Lloyd	516	93	—	1	6

	Total Sonnets	*Percentage Italian*	*Percentage English*	*Percentage Compromise*	*Percentage Other Forms*
Millay, Edna St. V.	68	44	31	—	25
Moore, Charles L.	100	—	100	—	—
Morton, David	178	1	99	—	—
Moulton, Louise	122	100	—	—	—
Poe, Edgar A.	5	—	40	—	60
Reese, Lizette W.	79	15	10	71	4
Robinson, Edwin A.	89	87	1	3	9
Santayana, George	61	100	—	—	—
Scollard, Clinton	67	100	—	—	—
Simms, William G.	61	—	8	20	72
Sterling, George	226	100	—	—	—
Taylor, Bayard	11	55	—	27	18
Teasdale, Sara	32	79	—	6	15
Thomas, Edith M.	143	98	2	—	—
Tuckerman, F. G.	70	—	—	—	100
Very, Jones	107	—	100	—	—
Vinal, Harold	74	4	51	22	23
Whittier, John G.	23	—	—	70	30
Wood, Clement	92	—	100	—	—
Woodberry, George	93	98	2	—	—
Wylie, Elinor	32	88	—	6	6

TABLE IV

This table lists all American writers of more than five sonnets who wrote exclusively in one form. It is evident from this, as from all the tables presented in this study, that the Italian form of the sonnet is the overwhelmingly predominant one. The great American masters of the sonnet have used it almost exclusively.

Italian

Barker, Elsa 26
Bates, Arlo 28
Bensel, James B. 10
Bunner, Henry C. 10
Crandall, Charles H. 12
Davidson, Winifred 12
Fawcett, Edgar 44
Guiney, Louise I. 46
Hazard, Caroline 92
Hooker, Wm. Brian 14
Jewett, Sophie 14
Kilmer, Joyce 13
Lee, Agnes 13
Lee, Muna 24
Longfellow, Henry W. 62
Lowell, Amy 41
Moulton, Louise C. 122
Peabody, Josephine 15
Riley, James W. 14
Sampson, Henry A. 36
Santayana, George 61
Scollard, Clinton 67
Sherman, Frank D. 18
Stanton, Frank L. 7
Sterling, George 226
Wharton, Edith 17

English

Aiken, Conrad 9
Aldis, Mary 7
Flexner, Hortense 17
Frazee-Bower, Helen 10
Moore, Charles L. 100
Tuckerman, Henry T. 29
Very, Jones 107
Wood, Clement 92

Compromise

Fisher, Mahlon L. 50

Irregular

Allston, Washington 73
Hill, George 15
Humphreys, David 12
Tuckerman, F. G. 70

TABLE V

This lengthy table is an attempt to show in a still different way the use made of the various sonnet forms by the more than two hundred American men and women considered in this study.

For this table, every author of more than ten sonnets was included, plus Poe and Bryant, with their even more limited output. Under the four headings Italian, English, Compromise, and Other Forms are listed all the writers using the form, together with the number of sonnets written in that form. A poet who uses all four forms, e. g., Arthur Davison Ficke, will be listed in all four columns. Anyone can, therefore, by merely running down one of these lists, ascertain practically all the American poets who have used a particular sonnet form, together with the number of sonnets contributed.

* indicates a preponderant use of the form so marked.

** indicates an exclusive use of the form so marked.

Italian

*Aldrich, Thomas Bailey	28
*Auslander, Joseph	36
**Barker, Elsa	26
**Bates, Arlo	28
*Bates, Katherine Lee	60
*Bayley, Peter	14
Benét, Stephen Vincent	9
*Benét, William Rose	30
**Bensel, James Berry	10
*Boker, George Henry	371
Branch, Anna Hempstead	24
Brooks, Phillips	1
Bryant, William Cullen	1
**Bunner, Henry Cuyler	10
Burt, Maxwell Struthers	2
*Burton, Richard	19
Bynner, Witter	7
*Cawein, Madison	72
*Chadwick, John White	23

English

Alcott, Amos Bronson	8
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey	1
Auslander, Joseph	8
Benét, Stephen Vincent	10
Branch, Anna Hempstead	2
Bryant, William Cullen	2
Burt, Maxwell Struthers	2
Burton, Richard	1
Bynner, Witter	4
Cawein, Madison	1
Chadwick, John White	2
Cone, Helen Gray	5
Cranch, Christopher Pearse	5
Cullen, Countee	16
Cummings, Ernest E.	6
*Dargan, Olive Tilford	60
*Deutsch, Babette	15
Dinsmore, Julia Stockton	1
Dresbach, Glenn Ward	37

Italian Continued

*Channing, William Ellery	9
*Coates, Florence Earle	37
*Cone, Helen Gray	17
*Conkling, Grace Hazard	33
Cornwell, Henry Sylvester	2
Cranch, Christopher Pearse	9
**Crandall, Charles Henry	12
*Cromwell, Gladys	22
Cullen, Countee	7
Cummings, Ernest E.	4
Dargan, Olive Tilford	5
**Davidson, Winifred	12
Deutsch, Babette	3
*Dinsmore, Julia Stockton	66
Dresbach, Glenn Ward	24
Eastman, Max	5
*Egan, Maurice Francis	36
Embury, Emma C.	3
Erskine, John	2
Evans, Donald	3
**Fawcett, Edgar	44
Ficke, Arthur Davison	4
Frost, Robert	3
*Garrison, Theodosia	13
*Garrison, William Lloyd	22
*Gibson, William	12
*Gilder, Richard Watson	67
**Guiney, Louise Imogen	46
*Hay, John	20
*Hayne, Paul Hamilton	66
**Hazard, Caroline	92
*Higginson, Thomas W.	20
Hillyer, Robert Silliman	3
*Holmes, Oliver Wendell	9
**Hooker, William Brian	14
Hovey, Richard	27
*Jackson, Helen Hunt	84
**Jewett, Sophie	14
*Johnson, Robert Underwood	18

English Continued

Egan, Maurice Francis	1
Embury, Emma C.	2
Erskine, John	4
*Ficke, Arthur Davison	119
**Flexner, Hortense	17
**Frazee-Bower, Helen	10
Frost, Robert	2
Garrison, Theodosia	1
Garrison, William Lloyd	10
Gibson, William	1
Gilder, Richard Watson	20
Hayne, Paul Hamilton	3
Higginson, Thomas Wentworth	1
Hovey, Richard	15
Johnson, Robert Underwood	1
Jones, Thomas S., Jr.	2
Kreymborg, Alfred	17
Lanier, Sidney	11
Lazarus, Emma	4
Leonard, William Ellery	11
Low, Samuel	7
Lowell, James Russell	6
Mackaye, Percy	3
MacLeish, Archibald	1
Marquis, Donald Perry	3
Millay, Edna St. Vincent	21
Miller, J. Corson	2
Mitchell, Langdon Elwyn	10
**Moore, Charles Leonard	100
Morley, Christopher	5
*Morton, David	177
*Oppenheim, James	12
*Percy, William Alexander	15
Pickering, Henry	2
Poe, Edgar Allan	2
Ransom, John Crowe	3
Reese, Lizette Woodworth	8

Italian Continued

*Jones, Thomas S. Jr. 135
**Kilmer, Joyce 13
Kinney, Elizabeth A. 12
Kreymborg, Alfred 8
Lanier, Sidney 16
Larcom, Lucy 3
Lazarus, Emma 5
**Lee, Agnes 13
**Lee, Muna 24
Leonard, William Ellery .. 103
*Lodge, George Cabot 96
**Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth 62
**Lowell, Amy 41
*Lowell, James Russell 36
*Mackaye, Percy 29
*MacLeish, Archibald 14
*Markham, Edwin 12
*Marquis, Donald Perry 34
*Mifflin, Lloyd 478
Millay, Edna St. Vincent .. 30
Miller, J. Corson 17
Mitchell, Langdon Elwyn 1
*Monroe, Harriet 19
Morley, Christopher 3
Morton, David 1
**Moulton, Louise Chandler 122
Parsons, Thomas William 2
**Peabody, Josephine Preston 15
Percival, James Gates 3
Percy, William Alexander 3
Piatt, John James 5
*Pickering, Henry 12
Preston, Margaret Junkin 8
*Ransom, John Crowe 20
Reese, Lizette Woodworth 12
Ridge, Lola 1
**Riley, James Whitcomb 14

English Continued

Robinson, Edwin Arlington 1
Saxe, John Godfrey 5
Seeger, Alan 6
Shivell, Paul 7
Simms, William Gilmore .. 5
Smith, Elizabeth Oakes 12
Stoddard, Richard Henry 4
*Thaxter, Celia Laighton .. 9
Thomas, Edith Matilda 3
Tietjens, Eunice 13
**Tuckerman, Henry Theodore 29
Upson, Arthur 4
**Very, Jones 107
*Vinal, Harold 38
Weaver, John Van Alstyn 2
Weeks, Robert Kelley 2
Wheelock, John Hall 3
Whitman, Sarah Helen Powers 8
*Wilcox, Ella Wheeler 23
**Wood, Clement 92
Woodberry, George 2

Italian Continued

*Robinson, Edwin Arlington	77
**Sampson, Henry Aylett	36
**Santayana, George	61
Saxe, John Godfrey	3
**Scollard, Clinton	67
Seeger, Alan	5
**Sherman, Frank Dempster	18
*Shivell, Paul	22
Sill, Edward Rowland	7
Smith, Elizabeth Oakes	4
**Sterling, George	226
Stoddard, Richard Henry	5
Taylor, Bayard	6
*Teasdale, Sara	26
*Thomas, Edith Matilda	140
Tietjens, Eunice	4
Timrod, Henry	1
*Towne, Charles Hanson	19
*Untermeyer, Louis	37
*Upson, Arthur	39
*Van Dyke, Henry	29
Vinal, Harold	3
Weeks, Robert Kelley	4
**Wharton, Edith	17
*Wheelock, John Hall	33
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler	6
*Woodberry, George	91
*Wylie, Elinor	28

Compromise

Aldrich, Thomas Bailey	1
Auslander, Joseph	1
Benét, Stephen Vincent	9
Benét, William Rose	2
Benjamin, Park	4
Branch, Anna Hempstead	10
*Brooks, Phillips	10
Bryant, William Cullen	3
Burt, Maxwell Struthers	2

Other Forms

*Alcott, Amos Bronson	38
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey	1
**Allston, Washington	13
Auslander, Joseph	7
Bates, Katherine Lee	1
Bayley, Peter	2
Benét, Stephen Vincent	7
Benét, William Rose	5
Benjamin, Park	17

Compromise Continued

Bynner, Witter	1
Cawein, Madison	2
Chadwick, John White	4
Channing, William Ellery	2
Coates, Florence Earle	2
Cone, Helen Gray	3
Conkling, Grace Hazard	2
Cornwell, Henry Sylvester	1
Cranch, Christopher Pearse	9
Cullen, Countee	1
Deutsch, Babette	4
Eastman, Max	2
Embury, Emma C.	12
Erskine, John	3
*Evans, Donald	14
Ficke, Arthur Davison	4
**Fisher, Mahlon Leonard	50
Frost, Robert	4
Garrison, Theodosia	1
Garrison, William Lloyd	2
Gilder, Richard Watson	4
Hayne, Paul Hamilton	8
Hillyer, Robert Silliman	1
Hovey, Richard	1
Kreymborg, Alfred	2
*Lazarus, Emma	17
Leonard, William Ellery	78
Lodge, George Cabot	13
Low, Samuel	1
Lowell, James Russell	12
Lynch, Anne C.	3
Mackaye, Percy	1
MacLeish, Archibald	2
Markham, Edwin	3
Mifflin, Lloyd	4
Miller, J. Corson	1
Monroe, Harriet	1
Morley, Christopher	1
Oppenheim, James	1

Other Forms Continued

Boker, George Henry	18
Branch, Anna Hempstead	16
Brooks, Phillips	2
Bryant, William Cullen	3
Burt, Maxwell Struthers	7
Bynner, Witter	1
Cawein, Madison	4
Chadwick, John White	3
Coates, Florence Earle	1
Conkling, Grace Howard	4
*Cornwell, Henry Sylvester	14
Cranch, Christopher Pearse	5
Cromwell, Gladys	1
Cullen, Countee	4
Cummings, Ernest E.	7
Dargan, Olive Tilford	3
Dinsmore, Julia Stockton	1
Eastman, Max	9
Egan, Maurice Francis	6
Embury, Emma C.	7
Erskine, John	21
Evans, Donald	2
Ficke, Arthur Davison	21
Frost, Robert	1
Garrison, Theodosia	2
Garrison, William Lloyd	3
Gibson, William	1
Gilder, Richard Watson	5
Hay, John	2
Hayne, Paul Hamilton	21
**Hill, George	15
*Hillyer, Robert Silliman	33
Holmes, Oliver Wendell	2
**Humphreys, David	12
Jackson, Helen Hunt	1
*Kinney, Elizabeth A.	43
Kreymborg, Alfred	12
Lanier, Sidney	1
Larcom, Lucy	8

Compromise Continued

Percival, James Gates	4
Piatt, John James	1
Pickering, Henry	2
*Reese, Lizette Woodworth	56
Ridge, Lola	4
Robinson, Edwin Arlington	3
Saxe, John Godfrey	10
Seeger, Alan	19
Sill, Edward Rowland	1
Simms, William Gilmore	12
Smith, Elizabeth Oakes	1
Taylor, Bayard	3
Teasdale, Sara	2
Timrod, Henry	2
Towne, Charles Hanson	1
Untermeyer, Louis	3
Van Dyke, Henry	2
Vinal, Harold	16
Weaver, John Van Alstyn	7
*Whittier, John Greenleaf	16
Wylie, Elinor	2

Other Forms Continued

Lazarus, Emma	7
Leonard, William Ellery	105
Lodge, George Cabot	55
*Low, Samuel	14
Lowell, James Russell	3
Lynch, Anne C.	12
MacLeish, Archibald	3
Markham, Edwin	6
Mifflin, Lloyd	34
Millay, Edna St. Vincent	17
Miller, J. Corson	14
Mitchell, Langdon Elwyn	12
Monroe, Harriet	1
Morley, Christopher	1
*Parsons, Thomas William	8
*Percival, James Gates	18
Percy, William Alexander	1
Piatt, John James	5
Poe, Edgar Allan	3
Preston, Margaret Junkin	2
Ransom, John Crowe	5
Reese, Lizette Woodworth	3
Ridge, Lola	8
Robinson, Edwin Arlington	8
Saxe, John Godfrey	5
Seeger, Alan	14
Sill, Edward Rowland	2
*Simms, William Gilmore	44
Smith, Elizabeth Oakes	20
Stoddard, Richard Henry	2
Taylor, Bayard	2
Teasdale, Sara	5
Thaxter, Celia Laighton	4
*Timrod, Henry	12
**Tuckerman, Frederick G.	70
Untermeyer, Louis	4
Van Dyke, Henry	1
Vinal, Harold	17

Other Forms Continued

Weaver, John Van Alstyn	4
Weeks, Robert Kelley	8
Whitman, Sarah Helen Powers	5
Whittier, John Greenleaf	7
Wilcox, Ella Wheeler	1
Wylie, Elinor	2

TABLE VI

This is a tabulation of all the sonnets the forms of which were analyzed for consideration in this study. The work of each writer was classified as accurately as possible as eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century. In a number of cases different volumes of verse by the same author were placed in different centuries. This was always done on the basis of positive information, generally that of publication date. Authors whose lives began after approximately 1780 and ended before 1900-1910 were quite easily placed in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, a man like Edwin Arlington Robinson, born in 1869, was classified as twentieth century, although his *Collected Sonnets* bear the dates 1889-1927. It would seem, therefore, that many sonnets had to be classified arbitrarily. The vast majority of them, nevertheless, are properly placed; those of the eighteenth century are felt to be entirely accurate.

A vindication of the trustworthiness of this classification seems evident by a few comparisons. The individual sestets of the Italian sonnet forms will scarcely show a relation from century to century, for the preference of one writer may affect such figures considerably. For instance, only eight of the sonnets listed *Nineteenth Century* have the sestet form *cdceed*, while one hundred and twenty-seven of those classified as *Twentieth Century* have this form. But no less than ninety-two of these one hundred and twenty-seven sonnets with a sestet *cdceed* are from the pen of Caroline Hazard, whose sonnets, on the basis of the publication dates 1908, 1917, and 1929, seem more

of the twentieth than of the nineteenth century. But the Italian sonnets of irregular or of exceptional sestet written during any given period should bear some relation to the total number of Italian sonnets written during the same period, for miscellaneousness is hardly likely to be affected by a particular writer's preference. Only one-eighth of all the American sonnets of Italian form failed of a strict classification and fell into the group marked *Other Sestets,* so that this small group of unclassified sonnets is thoroughly representative of the whole sonnet activity of a period, rather than a reflection of a few individual preferences. An examination of TABLE VI will show that the sonnets of unclassified sestets are the third most numerous group in the nineteenth, in the twentieth, and in the total number. The number of Italian sonnets of unclassified sestets represents twelve and one-half per cent of all the Italian sonnets grouped as nineteenth century. In the twentieth century the same relation is thirteen and one-half per cent, a figure close enough to be regarded as identical. These relations hold good, of course, in spite of the fact that the twentieth century period represents much less time than does the nineteenth century period.

It is not contended that these figures prove anything other than that the classification into eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries seems accurate for sonnets of the Italian form, and therefore for those of all forms.

An apparent contradiction to the argument just used is offered by the figures for sonnets classified as other than Italian, English, or Compromise. Since twice as many sonnets are classified twentieth century as nineteenth, there should be twice as many irregular sonnets. But sonnet forms so irregular or so exceptional as to miss classification in any one of the twenty-four carefully selected schemes are far more characteristic of the poetry of 1800-1875 than of the poetry from then on. Whatever may be the merits of the average American sonnet of the past fifty years as poetry, it is certainly likely to be acceptable as form. The craftsmanship of the American sonnet has improved. It is understood, of course, that this statement is made of the

humbler poets; sonneteers like Longfellow and Boker are not thought of here.

Whatever may be the value of the following figures according to centuries, the totals remain, and they are both accurate and important. They tell the story of the American sonnet form from 1783 to 1929 in a manner at once succinct and unmistakable.

Italian		*Eighteenth Century*	*Nineteenth Century*	*Twentieth Century*	*Total*
a b b a a b b a	cdecde	0	353	844	1197
	cdcdcd	1	311	472	784
	cdcdee	1	122	158	281
	cddccd	5	169	85	259
	cddcdc	0	125	67	192
	cdcddc	2	66	76	144
	cdcede	0	22	121	143
	cdceed	0	8	127	135
	cddcee	3	29	78	110
	cdedce	0	41	60	101
	ccdeed	0	17	75	92
	cdeced	0	23	62	85
	ccdede	0	13	42	55
	cddece	0	11	37	48
	Other Sestets	1	186	361	548
		13	1496	2665	4174
English		12	377	882	1271
Compromise					
abba cddc effe gg		1	66	41	108
abba acca deed ff		1	9	73	83
abba cddc efg efg		0	8	71	79
abba cddc efef gg		1	31	36	68
abba acca def def		0	13	48	61
abba acca dede ff		0	24	31	55
abab cdcd efg efg		0	2	39	41
abba acca dedede		0	12	14	26
		3	165	353	521

	Eighteenth Century	*Nineteenth Century*	*Twentieth Century*	*Total*
Irregular and Other Forms	25	569	480	1074
Totals	53	2607	4380	7040

Recapitulation

	Eighteenth Century	*Nineteenth Century*	*Twentieth Century*	*Total*
Italian	13	1496	2665	4174
English	12	377	882	1271
Compromise	3	165	353	521
Irregular and Other Forms	25	569	480	1074
Totals	53	2607	4380	7040

TABLES VII AND VIII

These two final tables merely restate the figures of the preceding table in different ways, in order to make still more clear the relation of the various sonnet forms to each other and to the total number of sonnets written.

		Total Number of Sonnets in This Form	*Percentage of Sonnets in Italian Form* (4174)	*Percentage of Total American Sonnets* (7040)
abba abba	c d e c d e	1197	28.7	17.0
	c d c d c d	784	18.8	11.1
	c d c d e e	281	6.7	3.9
	c d d c c d	259	6.2	3.6
	c d d c d c	192	4.6	2.7
	c d c d d c	144	3.5	2.0
	c d c e d e	143	3.5	2.0
	c d c e e d	135	3.2	1.9
	c d d c e e	110	2.6	1.5
	c d e d c e	101	2.4	1.4
	c c d e e d	92	2.2	1.3
	c d e c e d	85	2.1	1.2
	c c d e d e	55	1.3	.8
	c d d e c e	48	1.1	.7
	Other Sestets	548	13.1	7.7

	Total Number of Sonnets in This Form	*Percentage of Sonnets in Compromise Form* (521)	*Percentage of Total American Sonnets* (7040)
abba cddc effe gg	108	20.7	1.5
abba acca deed ff	83	16.1	1.1
abba cddc efg efg	79	15.1	1.0
abba cddc efef gg	68	13.0	.9
abba acca def def	61	11.7	.8
abba acca dede ff	55	10.5	.8
abab cdcd efg efg	41	7.9	.6
abba acca dededе	26	5.0	.4

	Eighteenth Century		*Nineteenth Century*		*Twentieth Century*		*Total*	
	Number of Sonnets	*Percentage of 18th Century Sonnets*	*Number of Sonnets*	*Percentage of 19th Century Sonnets*	*Number of Sonnets*	*Percentage of 20th Century Sonnets*	*Number of Sonnets*	*Percentage of Total Sonnets*
Italian	13	24.5	1496	57.4	2665	60.9	4174	59.3
English	12	22.7	377	14.5	882	20.1	1271	18.1
Compromise	3	5.7	165	6.3	353	8.1	521	7.4
Irregular and Other Forms	25	47.1	569	21.8	480	10.9	1074	15.2
Totals	53	100.0	2607	100.0	4380	100.0	7040	100.0

AMERICAN SONNET SEQUENCES

In preparing this list of American sonnet sequences, the writer regarded as a sequence any series of sonnets obviously on the same theme, or definitely designated as a sequence by the author. Faced with the necessity of deciding what was the smallest number of sonnets that could be termed a sequence, he fixed upon four merely because of the existence of a number of sonnet series of that limited number which he would have omitted most unwillingly from this list. Cases in point are George Sterling's *On the Sea's Voice* and Elinor Wylie's *A Red Carpet for Shelley.*

In addition to the name, total number of sonnets comprising it, and a volume and page reference, each sequence is analyzed as to rime scheme. It will be seen that the form of the sonnet when used in a sequence is just as decidedly Italian in form as is the American sonnet in general. It seemed unnecessary in this list to classify with exactness the comparatively small number of sonnets neither Italian nor English, and a simple third category of Compromise and Irregular was allowed to suffice.

	Ital.	*Eng.*	*Com. & Irr.*	*Total*
Anderson, Maxwell, *Rain-Fugue; You Who Have Dreams,* N. Y., 1925, pp. 25-27		4	1	5
Auslander, Joseph, *Fata Morgana; Cyclops' Eye,* N. Y., 1926, pp. 33-38	7		2	9
Auslander, Joseph, *Sonnets to Amy Lowell; Ibid,* pp. 90-92	4			4
Bates, Arlo, *Sonnets in Shadow; Sonnets in Shadow,* Boston, 1887, unpaged	28			28
Bates, Katherine Lee, *In Bohemia; Yellow Clover,* N. Y., 1922, pp. 73-111	49			49
Benét, Stephen Vincent, *The Golden Corpse; Tiger Joy,* N. Y., 1925, pp. 88-95		6	2	8
Benét, William Rose, *To My Father; Moons of Grandeur,* N. Y., 1920, pp. 164-166	1		5	6
Boker, George Henry, *To England; Poems and Plays,* Boston, 1856, Vol. II, pp. 377-383	7			7
Boker, George Henry, *A Sequence;* Ibid, Vol. II, pp. 391-450	48		12	60

	Ital.	*Eng.*	*Com. & Irr.*	*Total*
Boker, George Henry, *A Sequence on Profane Love; Sonnets,* Phila., 1929	309		4	313
Branch, Anna Hempstead, *Sonnets From a Lock Box; Sonnets From a Lock Box,* N. Y., 1929, pp. 3-40	6	2	26	33
Burt, Maxwell Struthers, *Resurgam; Songs and Portraits,* N. Y., 1920, pp. 4-6			5	5
Bynner, Witter, *Chinese Procession; Century Magazine,* Vol. 105, pp. 533-538		3	2	5
Cone, Helen Gray, *Sonnets of the Great Peace; The Coat Without a Seam,* N. Y., 1919, pp. 11-17		5		5
Conkling, Grace Hazard, *Bells Beyond the Sand; Flying Fish,* N. Y., pp. 99-110	11		1	12
Conkling, Grace Hazard, *Sonnets For a Dark Lover;* Ibid, pp. 15-26	10		2	12
Conkling, Grace Hazard, *Steamer Letter; Witch and Other Poems,* N. Y., 1929, pp. 16-25	9			9
Dargan, Olive Tilford, *The Cycle's Rim—To One Drowned at Sea; The Cycle's Rim,* N. Y., 1916		53		53
Davidson, Winifred, *Point Loma Sonnets;* Braithwaite: *Anthology of Magazine Verse,* N. Y., 1924, p. 52 ff.	12			12
Dinsmore, Julia Stockton, *A Sonnet Sequence; Verses and Sonnets,* N. Y., 1910, pp. 95-106	23			23
Erskine, John, *Mediterranean; Sonata,* N. Y., 1925, pp. 57-60			4	4
Erskine, John, *Versailles;* Ibid, pp. 62-66		1	4	5
Erskine, John, *At the Front; Collected Poems,* N. Y., 1922, pp. 118-122			5	5
Evans, Donald, *Sonnets From the Patagonian; Sonnets From the Patagonian,* N. Y., 1914	3		15	18
Ficke, Arthur Davison, *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter; Sonnets of a Portrait Painter,* N. Y., 1922	1	47	3	51
Frazee-Bower, Helen, *Two Married;* Stevenson: *Home Book of Modern Verse,* pp. 232-233			4	4
Guiney, Louise Imogen, *Oxford Sonnets; Happy Ending,* N. Y., 1909, pp. 145-158	14			14
Guiney, Louise, *London Sonnets;* Ibid, pp. 159-170	12			12
Hale, Sarah Josepha, *The Empire of Woman; Three Hours or the Vigil of Love,* Phila., 1848, pp. 86-90			5	5
Hazard, Caroline, *Lenten Sonnets* / *Interlude* / *A Cycle of Grief* } One sequence; *A Scallop Shell of Quiet,* N. Y., 1908	40 / 15 / 8			63

	Ital.	*Eng.*	*Com. & Irr.*	*Total*
Jones, Thomas S., Jr., *Ave Atque Vale; The Rose Jar,* Portland, Me., 1915, pp. 49-53	5			5
Jones, Thomas S., Jr., *Sonnets of the Saints; Sonnets of the Saints,* Portland, Me., 1926	33			33
Jones, Thomas S., Jr., *Sonnets of the Cross; Sonnets of the Cross,* Portland, Me., 1927	57			57
Kreymborg, Alfred, *Savonarola Burning; Less Lonely,* N. Y., 1923, pp. 43-47		5		5
Lazarus, Emma, *Symphonic Studies; Poems,* Vol. I, N. Y., 1889, pp. 206-211			8	8
Lee, Muna, *Foreword; Sea Change,* N. Y., 1923	13			13
Leonard, William Ellery, *Two Lives; Two Lives,* N. Y., 1925	23	8	167	207
Lodge, George Cabot, *The Great Adventure; Poems and Dramas,* N. Y., 1911, pp. 3-59				
Divided into *Life*	25			25
Love	26			26
Death	26			26
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, *Divina Commedia; Poetical Works,* Riverside Edition pp. 374-376	6			6
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, *Three Friends of Mine;* Ibid, pp. 406-407	5			5
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, *The Two Rivers;* Ibid, pp. 414-415	4			4
Lowell, Amy, *Eleanora Duse; What's o'Clock?,* N. Y., 1925, pp. 235-240	6			6
Lowell, James Russell, *On Reading Wordsworth's Sonnets in Defense of Capital Punishment; Poems,* Riverside Edition, pp. 22-23			6	6
Mackaye, Percy, *The Conflict; Poems and Plays,* N. Y., 1916, pp. 29-34	6			6
Mifflin, Lloyd, *The Lament for Adonis; Collected Sonnets,* London, 1905, pp. 199-208	10			10
Mifflin, Lloyd, *Europa and the Bull;* Ibid, pp. 218-232	15			15
Mifflin, Lloyd, *The Lament for Bion;* Ibid, pp. 233-244	12			12
Millay, Edna St. Vincent, *Sonnets From An Ungrafted Tree; The Harp Weaver,* N. Y., 1923, pp. 73-89		1	16	17
Oppenheim, James, *War and Laughter; War and Laughter,* N. Y., 1916, pp. 113-124		12		12
Peabody, Josephine Preston, *In Memoriam; Collected Poems,* N. Y., 1927, pp. 509-514	7			7
Santayana, George, *Sonnets,* 1883-1893; *Poems,* N. Y., 1923, pp. 3-22	20			20

	Ital.	*Eng.*	*Com. & Irr.*	*Total*
Santayana, George, *Sonnets,* 1895; Ibid, pp. 25-54	30			30
Sterling, George, *On the Sea's Voice; House of Orchids,* San Francisco, 1911, pp. 40-43; *Thirty-Five Sonnets,* San Francisco, 1917, pp. 31-34; *Sails and Mirage,* San Francisco, 1921, pp. 115-116	4			4
Sterling, George, *Sonnets to Craig; Sonnets to Craig,* Long Beach, Calif., 1928	100			100
Teasdale, Sara, *Sonnets to Duse; Sonnets to Duse,* Boston, 1907, pp. 1-16	8			8
Tietjens, Eunice, *From the Mountains; Leaves in Windy Weather,* N. Y., 1929, pp. 53-65		13		13
Wharton, Edith, *The Mortal Lease; Artemis to Actaeon,* N. Y., 1909, pp. 37-44	17			17
Whitman, Sarah Helen Powers, *To Edgar Allan Poe; Poems,* Boston, 1879, pp. 90-95		3	3	6
Wood, Clement, *Eagle Sonnets; The Tide Comes In,* N. Y., 1923, pp. 95-125		31		31
Wood, Clement, *The Eagle Flies; The Eagle Flies,* Chicago, 1925		40		40
Woodberry, George, *America and England in Danger of War; Poems,* N. Y., 1903, pp. 43-46	5			5
Woodberry, George, *Ideal Passion; Ideal Passion,* N. Y., 1917; *The Roamer,* N. Y., 1920, pp. 145-186	42			42
Wylie, Elinor, *A Red Carpet for Shelley; Trivial Breath,* N. Y., 1928, pp. 68-71	3		1	4
Wylie, Elinor, *Angels and Earthly Creatures; The New Republic,* January 2, 1929	18			18

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JOSEPH BRENNIAN CO., PRINTERS, PHILA.